



**THE LINDOW MOSS
LANDSCAPE
PARTNERSHIP**

Annual Report Year end 2024



INTRODUCTION

The LMLP was formed from an aspiration relating to countryside stewardship in the Wilmslow Neighbourhood Plan resulting in the appointment of Groundwork CLM as lead consultant and knowledgeable participant to seek interest from other groups and to apply for grants to finance the planned developments and activities aimed at securing the long-term future of the Lindow Moss landscape. Lindow Moss has no statutory protection other than as its location in the Green Belt and extends beyond any one local boundary.

The project redline boundary is the Lindow Moss Landscape Character Area (LCA), an area of around 470 hectares roughly corresponding with the historic extent of Lindow Common. The LCA reflects the continuing existence of peat soils and wetland habitats in this area. The LCA is bounded to the east by Wilmslow and runs from Morley Green in the North to Lindow End and Row of Trees in the South. In general terms, peat soils continue to persist in the north and east of the LCA, although in many places degraded and extracted. The south and west are defined by sand and clay soils and have more in common with the wider 'Lower Wooded Farmland' area that surrounds the LCA, both in terms of ecology and land use.

The Partnership has come to the end of the first year. Summary reports of activities from each of the members are included below and these show the progress that has been made towards achieving the 6 aims that underpin the 10-year plan published in the LMLP Prospectus. Of note is the full-time employment of a project manager and a community liaison officer, both of whom have played key parts in public activities and working with and advising landowners within the landscape.

2024 was the 40th anniversary of the find of Lindow Man and Transition Wilmslow took the lead in arranging a variety of activities throughout the year celebrating the anniversary which involved and attracted members of the public to visit the landscape. These included walks, an art trail, cultural and environmental events and a 12-week lecture programme hosted by the Wilmslow Guild for Lifelong Learning.

Extensive and interesting investigative and improvement work is planned over next year and beyond, some in conjunction with restoration work planned by the owners of the cut over peat bog. Applications to funding sources to support the partnership work will continue.



2.0 Financial Statement (GCLM)

Funding overview:

- Wilmslow Town Council provided £10,000 to cover initial development and the preparation of bids for first round of funding
- National Lottery Heritage Fund, £250,000 over 24 months to March 2026 supporting community engagement activities, planned interpretation of features such as the Lindow Man Find Site, and staffing for “Lindow Moss a Landscape in Recovery”.
- Lowland Agricultural Peat Water Discovery Pilot aims to generate evidence that enables and promotes a change in peatland water management in support of responsible farming in lowland agricultural peat and is funded by the Environment Agency and Defra. In Lindow the LAPWDP has funded; staff time, research into land ownership, engagement with landowners, and research into the condition and depth of peat throughout the Landscape Character Area.
- UK Shared Prosperity Fund aims to improve pride in place and increase life chances across the UK investing in communities and place, supporting local business, and people and skills. The funding must be spent by March 2025. In Lindow UKSPF has paid for; research into heritage walks, wildlife audits, watercourse monitoring and research into historic landscape features.

All funds have been allocated for approved expenditure.

The partnership has a list of target funders for future fundraising in 2025 and beyond, utilising local and national funding opportunities.



3.0 Report on member activities



3.1 Groundwork CLM

Groundwork Cheshire, Lancashire and Merseyside (GCLM) are a founding member of the Lindow Moss Landscape Partnership (LMLP) and have been responsible for securing and administrating grant funding on behalf of the LMLP. Using this funding and with input and guidance from the partnership, GCLM have progressed the aims of the partnership as detailed in the table on page 5, reporting against the approved purposes set by the funders. Summary details of these approved purposes are also included here and were set in collaboration with the LMLP during the writing of the bids.

Through work carried out in partnership and by utilising the immense knowledge, passion and experience present within the partnership, the LMLP has begun the process of creating a community of landowners and stakeholders who are a passionate as we are about restoring the Lindow Moss area for people, nature and climate.



The LMLP created a plan that 'looks forward to 2035 and outlines the actions we believe are needed to achieve our vision of a 'landscape in recovery – for nature, for the climate and for our citizens'.

There are 6 clear aims that underpin the vision. Listed below is how we've met each aim.

Action	Aim
Employed two members of staff	Aim 5: New skills for a greener economy
Helped community groups to launch two walking routes around the LCA focusing on the history and heritage of the area.	Aim 1: To celebrate our cultural heritage Aim 4: Wellbeing and the visitor economy Aim 6: To place communities in the lead
Submitted a planning application for access and interpretation work on the cut over bog	Aim 4: Wellbeing and the visitor economy Aim 6: To place communities in the lead
Collaborated with our partners Transition Wilmslow on the 'Lindow Season' of events to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the discovery of Lindow Man. This has included indoor and outdoor art exhibitions, talks and lectures, citizen science events, guided walks, and work with local schools.	Aim 1: To celebrate our cultural heritage Aim 6: To place communities in the lead
Worked with partners Mersey Rivers Trust to establish a group of volunteers to monitor water quality and to map ditches and watercourses throughout the area	Aim 2: To encourage improved biodiversity and nature recovery Aim 3: To capture and store carbon
Worked with partners CWT to survey and map Local Wildlife Sites within the LCA, recording species present, engaging with landowners and making suggestions for future management.	Aim 2: To encourage improved biodiversity and nature recovery
Mapped land ownership for the area and begun the work of engaging with these landowners, particularly around access for peat and wildlife surveys	Aim 2: To encourage improved biodiversity and nature recovery Aim 3: To capture and store carbon Aim 6: To place communities in the lead
Commissioned contractors to carry out surveys of the peat soils across the LCA and map opportunities for future re-wetting of peat soils	Aim 2: To encourage improved biodiversity and nature recovery Aim 3: To capture and store carbon
Worked with local youth groups and schools to educate them about the importance of peatlands and the range of specialist species present there	Aim 1: To celebrate our cultural heritage Aim 4: Wellbeing and the visitor economy
Communicated and connected with a range of academics with interests in the bog, the wider landscape, and the history of the site	Aim 1: To celebrate our cultural heritage
Carried out research into the historic landscape, focusing on the 'Moss rooms,' which are amongst the best examples of this medieval and early modern field pattern in Cheshire.	Aim 1: To celebrate our cultural heritage

3.2 Transition Wilmslow

To coincide with the commencement of restoration work as well as the 40th Anniversary of the discovery of Lindow Man, Transition Wilmslow developed the Discover Lindow season which aimed to engage the community via a series of events. These included:

- The development of a new website: www.discoverlindow.org
- A season launch exhibition at Wilmslow Library of photographs and artefacts from Lindow Moss – People and Peat, curated by Professor Jonathan Lagueard of MMU.
- The development and launch of a new Lindow Moss Heritage Trail with accompanying leaflet. So far 10,000 leaflets have been printed with over 6,000 distributed.
- The Window on Lindow Art Trail featuring large scale works of art in situ on Lindow Moss. Curated by artist Phil Barton and featuring 4 other artists.
- A school project which saw pupils from all local primary schools receiving teaching on the Iron Age from Professor Melanie Giles of Manchester University. Pupils then produced banners featuring Iron Age inspired artwork which were displayed en masse on the Moss as part of the Art Trail. Wilmslow High School also produced an artwork as part of the trail.
- The collection of oral histories from people who have lived and worked around the Moss resulted in a specially commissioned feature called Lindow Moss Voices which is available for visitors to the Moss to listen to. This 5-minute production features memories from those involved in the discovery of Lindow Man as well as dramatisation of the words of Lindow Man as imagined by archaeologist Rick Turner.
- A Bioblitz led by Professor Simon Caporn, saw visitors and experts identifying plants, insects, and birds on the Moss. Training on how to observe and record observations were a key part of the event.
- A Dawn Walk featuring readings and music (from the Iron Age Carnyx). This was on 1 August to commemorate the date of the discovery of Lindow Man. A film based on the event is available on YouTube.
- A poetry walk featuring professional poets and scientists guiding visitors over the Moss and encouraging them to see the landscape in new ways.
- 'Lindow Man, his people and his landscape' were presented in a 12-week course at The Wilmslow Guild for Lifelong Learning with speakers from the British Museum, Manchester University, MMU and more. Curated by Professor John Handley, this was a fascinating course which looked in depth at bogs, bog bodies, landscape history and more.
- There have also been a series of art exhibitions at The Wilmslow Guild for Life long Learning, as well as workshops on Iron Age woodwork and jewellery as well as additional talks.



3.3 Cheshire Wildlife Trust

Cheshire Wildlife Trust has collaborated with project partners to survey several Local Wildlife Sites within the project area. These sites are designated as being of County significance due to their high existing wildlife value. Recent surveys have updated the Local Wildlife Site criteria and enabled the team to provide bespoke habitat management advice to landowners. This guidance will support future habitat management and creation across the area, ensuring these sites continue to sustain flagship habitats and species.

In addition, desktop surveys are currently assessing Potential Local Wildlife Sites in the area. These sites have been identified as potentially meeting the criteria for County significance but have not yet been surveyed. Desk-based assessments are ongoing, with field surveys planned for next year. Any Potential Local Wildlife Sites that meet the criteria will be submitted to the Local Wildlife Site Partnership for formal designation. Landowners of these sites will also receive tailored habitat management advice to help them enhance the area for nature.

The updated habitat and species records will be combined with data from other partners, including peat depth surveys and hydrological reports, to support the development of an overarching nature recovery strategy for the project area.



3.4 Mersey Rivers Trust

MRT has focused on the hydrology and water quality of the Lindow Moss landscape during 2024, gathering key baseline data to design future actions to improve biodiversity and nature recovery as well as capture and storing carbon. In support of placing communities in the lead, we have trained local community volunteers to carry out mapping and surveys of the depth and flow direction of the various drainage ditches of the landscape, as well as taking basic water quality samples.

Supplemented by MRT staff survey work, this has enabled a detailed hydrological map of the drainage system to be produced which will help design measures to re-wet the peat by raising local water levels.

The water quality sampling work by the volunteers has been supplemented by water samples taken by Manchester University students and a researcher at Liverpool John Moores University of the streams draining the former landfill sites at Newgate Nature Reserve. The universities have analysed water samples for a wide range of chemical parameters so we can assess the impact of the landfill leachate discharging into the stream network and consider potential remedial measures to protect aquatic ecology. MRT prepared a detailed hydrological and water quality report in August, drawing on the survey results and synthesizing the data with historic evidence and datasets. Further survey work is planned in 2025, including training some additional volunteers in January 2025 and continuing the collaborative work with Manchester University and Liverpool John Moores University on water quality issues.

3.5 Wilmslow Town Council and Wilmslow Neighbourhood Plan Implementation Group

Wilmslow Town Council is represented on the LMLP board and has helped with funding for events and activities in the Discover Lindow programme, including the Lindow Moss Heritage Trail and the Art Trail. This in turn attracted financial support from the Wilmslow Civic Trust, Evans Arts Trust and the Robert Clutterbuck Charitable Trust.

The Wilmslow Neighbourhood Plan supported the principle of limited residential development on the former peat processing site with a view to securing an end to commercial peat extraction, recovery of the water table and ecological restoration of the cutover peat bog at Lindow Moss. The residential development, comprising 14 houses, is now complete and the ecological restoration programme is underway. The planning consent for restoration requires the establishment of a Lindow Moss Liaison Committee to ensure that the local community are fully engaged and informed in the restoration process. During 2025, the Neighbourhood Plan Implementation Group (WNPIG) worked with the site manager and others to establish the Liaison Committee and they provide the secretariat for that. The Town Council, along with Mobberley Parish Council, is represented on the Liaison Committee. On behalf of the Town Council the WNPIG takes an active interest in the restoration process.



3.6 Cheshire East Council

Cheshire East Council is a member of the Lindow Moss Landscape Partnership and the Lindow Moss Liaison Committee. The LMLP is a working example of a Landscape Scale Project as envisaged in the Council's Green Infrastructure Plan. Within the Lindow Moss project area the council manages two important natural assets – Lindow Common Site of Special Scientific Interest and Newgate Nature Reserve. Besides its scientific importance as a lowland heathland, Lindow Common is a very popular visitor attraction and its status as a Local Nature Reserve provides an effective framework for blending visitor enjoyment with nature conservation. This requires skilled input by CEC rangers from the Bollin Valley Partnership. Besides visitor management, interpretation and habitat management, the rangers monitor the level of the water table. A long run of data has been made available to the LMLP which will help to inform our understanding of the hydrology of Lindow Moss. Newgate Nature Reserve comprises two former landfill sites which provide excellent examples of creative conservation for woodland on the northern site and wild flower meadows on the southern site. Both Lindow Common and Newgate Nature Reserve are integral features of the Lindow Moss heritage Trail. The footpath and bridleway network itself is overseen by the CEC Public Rights of Way Team and the Cheshire East Countryside Access Forum takes an active interest in the LMLP providing advice and guidance, especially in regard to 'access for all'. Through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, CEC is a significant funder of the LMLP and its activities.

3.7 Friends of Lindow Moss.

An interim Friends of Lindow Moss Committee was established in Autumn 2023, initially as a group under the umbrella of Transition Wilmslow (a registered charity) to support, influence and play an active role in the future of Lindow Moss. Over 100 people attended the official public launch event in February 2024.

The Friends Group aims to build on the work already undertaken by many in the past. It will work to pass on this precious legacy, with its rich biodiversity, historical and ecological significance, to future generations and to encourage public enjoyment of the Moss in a sustainable and resilient way. At the last count 560 people had subscribed to the Friends of Lindow Moss newsletter.



3.8 Natural England

The Bollin to Mersey Natural Recovery Partnership

England is one of the most nature-depleted countries on Earth, and bending the curve back in favour of nature is an immense challenge that requires large-scale, long-term action across all sectors of society. In response, Defra and Natural England have committed to developing a national Nature Recovery Network (NRN) to revitalise nature in England, restoring and creating wildlife-rich spaces across the country, enhancing our resilience to climate change, and maximising the benefits nature provides to people and communities.

Achieving these goals will require public, private and third sector bodies working together towards common goals. Nature Recovery Projects and Partnerships (NRPs) are a flagship set of just 12 schemes designed to establish these long-term, self-sustaining partnerships in strategically significant parts of the country. The Bollin to Mersey Nature Recovery Partnership (NRP) is one of these high-impact schemes driving nature recovery in the North West, and Lindow Moss is situated within this NRP.

This complex geography already contains a diverse set of highly successful local partnerships, including Lindow Moss Landscape Partnership. The NRP will seek to add value to the existing work at Lindow Moss with the aim of being a force-multiplier for nature recovery, for partners, and for the wider community, turning the tide in favour of our wildlife, our landscapes, and our local communities.

3.8 Members and objectives

The Lindow Moss Landscape Partnership is a collective of liked-minded partners, landowners and organisations that are committed to working together to conserve, restore and interpret the wider Lindow Moss landscape for the benefit of nature, the climate and people.

A 'bottom-up' partnership driven by the local community, the Lindow Moss Partnership Steering Committee comprises representatives from the following groups:

- Wilmslow Neighbourhood Plan Implementation Group
- Wilmslow Town Council,
- Transition Wilmslow,
- Friends of Lindow Moss,
- Cheshire East Council,
- Cheshire Wildlife Trust,
- Mersey Rivers Trust,
- Groundwork Cheshire Lancs & Merseyside (Lead partner).

The 6 aims of the partnership as published in the prospectus are:

- 1: To celebrate our cultural heritage
- 2: To encourage improved biodiversity and nature recovery
- 3: To capture and store carbon
- 4: Wellbeing and visitor economy
- 5: New skills for a greener economy
- 6: To place communities in the lead,

For more information:

T: 01942 821 444

E: lindow@groundwork.org.uk

www.discoverlindow.org



