

## **Buxton Civic Association Limited**

### **Environmental Report**

**2014/15**

The past year has seen BCA continue to put the environment at the centre of its business model, ensuring that we maintain the balance between conservation and enhancement of ecology of our estate and providing the maximum possible access for our visitors to enjoy and benefit from the work we do. The board identified four Principal Environmental Objectives for the organisation

- a. Conserving and enhancing the ecology of our woods and the cave
- b. Educating our staff and visitors about the above
- c. Minimising the environmental impact of our activities
- d. Working with local organisations and statutory bodies in the furtherance of our work.

The objectives of BCA remain the preservation and enhancement of the natural and built environment of Buxton. BCA seeks to operate to the highest feasible standards within the properties over which we have direct control and through our accreditation with the Peak District Environmental Quality Mark (EQM) to ensure that we seek suppliers that are wherever possible local and put the environment at the centre of their business.

The board objectives align closely with those required to gain and retain the accreditation. The EQM requires us to put the following objectives at the forefront of what we do;

- e. support the local economy
- f. protect the global environment
- g. enhance the local environment
- h. invest in people and communities
- i. Celebrate what's special about the Peak District National Park.

We were awarded the EQM (Peak District Environmental Quality Mark) in 2013. We are currently the largest and most complex organisation in

the private sector to have received the award, given the diversity of our business and our environmental responsibilities.

Receiving the award is one thing, keeping it is another. We have to undergo an annual audit to ensure that we are complying with the standards required and that we have an action plan to further the five objectives mentioned. I am glad to say that thanks to all the hard work of everyone in the organisation we passed our audit for 2014.

I thought it would be useful to take the five objectives and demonstrate how we manage to comply and how we aim to improve year on year.

- a. We support the local economy in a number of ways. You have already heard about the financial performance, well almost all of the purchasing, employment and value added aspects of the business is spent locally. BCA already had a policy of purchasing as much of its supplies from local suppliers before EQM, and the EQM accreditation has really just focused this process to get us to look at increasing and extending the local supplier base and also reviewing their environmental policies and credentials.
- b. Protecting the global economy sounds grand and might seem a bit outside our remit. But if everyone and every organisation does its bit then all these small things add up and make a big difference. So this year we have moved to using recycled paper that is chlorine free. Wherever possible we use emails to communicate. We have also ensured that wherever possible our shop produce is sourced from environmentally responsible suppliers. In the past switching from traditional light sources to LED's in the cave made a massive difference to electricity consumption which not only benefited the environment but is also impacting on the bottom line financially. Providing bus links to bus timetables and train timetables on our website also enables visitors to use public transport should they wish.
- c. We already do a huge amount to help and enhance the local environment. The glades in the woods continue to thrive and of course the cave is a SSSI as well. But they don't just manage themselves and lots of work has gone into maintaining and keeping them at the required standards. By focusing on the heritage and environmental aspects of the cave on the tours we are also providing a key educational resource both locally and nationally. We are looking at investing in rain water harvesting, after all it is something we have plenty of, to flush the toilets. Unfortunately at the moment

solar panels are not an option, not due to the low number of sunny days, but because the orientation of the building, surrounded as it is by trees which reduce the availability of suitable light. You will hear about the work we are doing in the woods to improve biodiversity under the woodlands report, so I won't repeat it here, but on a personal note already one can see an increase in buzzards visiting the ride to prey on the rabbits which can now be seen more clearly on the glades. The butterfly survey that Steve Orridge has organised will set an important bench mark against which to measure future results, and of course we have our badger vaccination programme going ahead for the second year which is doing vital work to protect the wildlife population from Bovine TB.

- d. We are doing a lot of work to help and support local communities. The sculptures that you can see in the picnic area were organised by the High Community Arts Group. The woodland walks, the dawn chorus walk and the social dog walks are all part of our programme to reach out into the community. Attendance at the Spring Fair and the Charity Bazaar are chances to explain the work we do in the woods and Civic Day provided an opportunity to highlight the range of projects, in particular, "Places and Spaces" which you will hear more about later. We also provide a key environmental resource to schools, as the Stone Age is now a key part of the curriculum and we are ideally placed to provide practical hands on experiences for the schools to fulfil their obligations. BCA has also contributed to the Serpentine Project, run and managed by Transition Buxton, both in terms of helping them with a financial donation and through practical help from our Woodland Volunteers group.
- e. The final theme that the EQM requires us to think about and deliver is to celebrate what is special about the Peak District. Everything we do celebrates the wider Peak District, from the woods we manage, the cave, the visitors that we receive and who can go away having understood a little bit more of the area geographically, environmentally and culturally by visiting us.

Simon Fussell