



# DUCHY of LANCASTER

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## NEWSLETTER

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## Welcome



The past year has been one of the most eventful in the Duchy's recent history. Firstly, we were deeply saddened by the passing of the late Queen Elizabeth whose extraordinary life of service spanned more than 70 years. Then we came together in joyful celebration for the coronation of Their Majesties King Charles III and Queen Camilla in Westminster Abbey, heralding a new spirit of optimism across the country.

Nowhere was this optimism more keenly felt, perhaps, than across Britain's farming and agricultural industries. His Majesty has a long-standing passion for responsible environmental management, ecological protections and sustainable farming practices. His deep conviction that the health and wellbeing of the nation is inextricably linked to the health and wellbeing of the natural environment is very well known and highly respected. Regenerative agriculture therefore has a critical role to play in ensuring a healthy future for food, farmers and farming in the UK.

Ensuring the long-term sustainability of the Duchy estates continues to be our main area of focus across all areas of the business. During the year, we have worked closely with Dr David Cope to

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## The King, Duke of Lancaster!



We were delighted to host the first official visit of The King as Duke of Lancaster in June. His Majesty travelled to Yorkshire on the Royal Train, pulled by The Flying Scotsman. On arrival, The King was greeted by cheering crowds before moving on to a series of private meetings with His Duchy farming tenants.

These included Chris and Lisa Timms at West Blansby Farm on the Pickering Estate, Mark and Sam Graham at Hunt House Farm on the Goathland Estate, Adam and Claire

Turnbull at Ripleys Farm on the Cloughton Estate and Joe and Debbie Green at the purpose-built steading, Fields Farm, also on the Cloughton estate. The Duke also visited Pickering Woods with Head Forester, Geraint Richards.

This was a hugely enjoyable day and a special moment for those tenants who hosted elements of the visit, creating memories which they and their families will treasure for many years to come.



develop a detailed sustainability plan which includes measures to improve biodiversity and soil management in our agricultural portfolio, reduce our own operational greenhouse gas emissions, improve the energy efficiency of our properties and expand and improve the management of our woodlands. Going forward, we will continue to improve our benchmarking and performance measures so that we can demonstrate the value of our activities and investments in these critical areas. This will help us all to develop a common understanding of what we are seeking to achieve over the long term, how we plan to get there and where we currently are on the journey.

Our ambition remains to be one of the most respected let landed estates in the country and we believe that we can best achieve this by maintaining good tenant relationships, continuing our investment in the restoration of our assets, and investing in sustainability and environmental improvements to protect the portfolio for future generations.

This year's Annual Report records a largely positive performance across most areas of the business, notwithstanding the ongoing challenges and uncertainties of the last 12 months. The diverse nature of the portfolio and our ability to take a long-term view with regard to investment and development decisions continues to provide the business with both strength and resilience.

My thanks to all members of the team for their continued hard work and commitment.

Finally, I should like to welcome Sir James Leigh-Pemberton CVO to the Duchy family as he takes over the role of Chairman of the Duchy Council. Sir James succeeds Sir Alan Reid GCV0 who has served as Chairman of the Council since 2018. On behalf of everyone involved with the Duchy I should like to thank Sir Alan for his service and wish him a long and happy retirement.

**Nathan Thompson CVO**  
CEO, Duchy of Lancaster

## Sustainability Update

To help us communicate our key sustainability objectives to our staff, tenants and partners, we have articulated our ambitions under three main headings (Planet, People and Performance) with a set of clear objectives under each heading:

### Planet

- Ensure the business is operationally net zero (Scopes 1 & 2) in terms of carbon emissions by 2028 and fully net zero (Scopes 1, 2 & 3) before 2050
- Protect the balance of nature and restore the health of our soils across the estates
- Reduce waste, avoid pollution to air, water and soil, and increase the proportion of reused or recycled material used across the estates.



### People

- Drive a common understanding of and commitment to our sustainability journey among staff, tenants, partners and other stakeholders
- Create sustainable and socially cohesive living and working environments for Duchy tenants and their communities
- Support the health and wellbeing of our staff, tenants, partners and other stakeholders.



### Performance

- Work with supply chains whose credentials, aims and objectives are aligned with our own objectives and values
- Make environmental performance and commitment to the principles of the Terra Carta a prerequisite to new leases, applications for funding and/or financial support and investment
- Invest in the delivery of all other objectives by embedding the principles of sustainability and responsible asset management across all areas of the business.



## HMS Lancaster To The Rescue

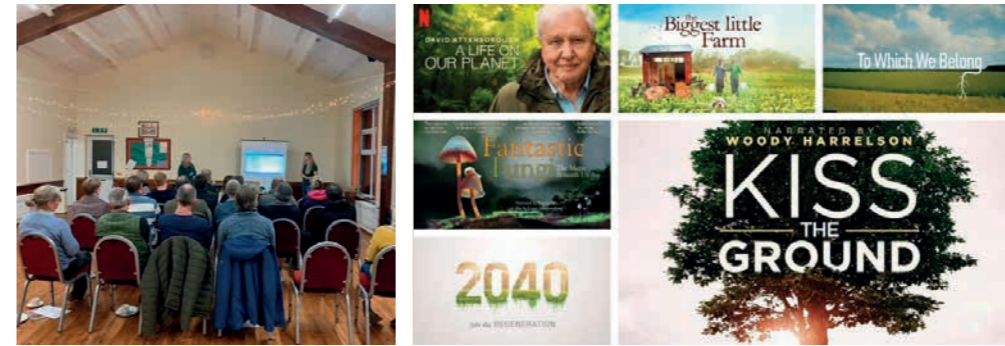


The past few months have certainly kept the crew of HMS Lancaster extremely busy. The ship has travelled far and wide across the Middle East, carrying out vital security tasks. These have included deterring attacks on merchant vessels in the Straits of Hormuz,

enabling the evacuation of thousands of UK and US nationals from Sudan, and seizing over 10 tons of illegal narcotics in the Gulf of Oman. On one day alone, the crew apprehended two separate shipments of these illegal drugs, confiscating six tonnes of hashish, 75 kilos of heroin and 50 kilos of crystal meth, a haul which might otherwise have found its way to unscrupulous dealers in the UK.

The Ship is now alongside in Duqm, Oman for a maintenance period before she is handed over to Port crew in late July. The Starboard crew will then be able to return to their families for a period of well-earned leave, while their opposite numbers take up the challenge and continue their good work.

## Keeping It In The Family



When we asked our farming tenants what we could do to help them develop their businesses in line with our own sustainability ambitions and objectives, they asked us to facilitate a number of things. Some asked for more information on how to protect the health of their soil, others asked for financial assistance to help with the purchase of new machinery such as direct drills, and still others asked for permission to plant wildflower meadows and additional hedgerows on the land across their holdings. One of the most common themes, however, was a request for regular and proactive communication and a means of sharing ideas and experiences with their peers.

We have therefore set up a new email group specifically for communication around sustainability, environmentally responsible farming practices and the sharing of best practice across the estates. We have called this new initiative The Duchy Farming Family because a good family not only provides a stable and secure environment for all, it also allows each member of that family the freedom to grow and develop at their own pace.

The rural team will use this channel to communicate snippets of information that we believe will be of value to our tenants and their businesses. In return, we have asked our farmers to share any 'light bulb moments' they may have. This regular exchange of information and ideas will help us to work together to protect the health and productivity of the land, while at the same time improving the quality of the nation's food offering.

## Hedge Restoration Project

Following the biodiversity audit of our rural estates carried out in partnership with Natural England and the Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust (GWCT), the rural team has been looking at ways of improving and enhancing our hedgerow habitats across the estates.

Last year, the team audited all of the hedgerows across the Duchy's Whitewell Estate in Lancashire. This showed that, while a number of hedges had been restored by tenants and new planting had been completed, there was still a number of gaps in evidence.

Working with the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) team responsible for administering the Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) scheme in the Forest of Bowland as well as our tenants on the Estate, we set up the Whitewell Hedge Restoration Project. Our aim was to restore our hedgerows through the 'gapping up' of existing hedges, while also enhancing the natural landscape of the estates with the planting of new hedgerows where appropriate.



Groundworks began immediately, with much of the preparatory work being carried out by our tenants. Planting was overseen by our forestry consultants, Forwoods Ltd, working with reforestation specialists Tomorrow's Forest. The new hedgerows, which are a mix of hawthorn (60%), hazel (17%), holly (8%), dog rose (6%), crab apple (4%), honeysuckle (4%) and guelder rose (1%), have subsequently been planted and are progressing well.

We are now undertaking a similar exercise on the Crewe Estate in Cheshire.

## Litter Pickers



Two of our rural surveyors took time out recently to join local schoolchildren on a litter pick in the village of Dunsop Bridge on the Whitewell Estate in Lancashire.

Lydia Richards and James Pyrah joined forces with pupils at Thorneyholme RC Primary School after the Headteacher invited the youngsters to 'clear up our village for our new King and for love of the environment'. The children donned protective gloves and picked up refuse sacks before moving through the village, removing litter and waste from hedgerows and verges. As a result of the exercise, a significant amount of discarded plastic, glass and cardboard was collected and disposed of responsibly in line with the School's environmental policy and teaching of the countryside code.

## Duke of Burgundy

A rare species of butterfly has been returned to Yorkshire for the first time in over a decade. In the UK, the intricately marked Duke of



Burgundy was traditionally found only on the chalk downlands of Southern England. However, in 2011, a small number were found in woodland on the Duchy of Lancaster's Pickering estate. In response to the find, the Duchy agreed to the removal of newly planted deciduous trees to prevent the small colony becoming 'shaded out' as the trees grew. The original clearing was then enlarged and extended and a Butterfly Conservation group began coppicing a nearby area of woodland also owned by the Duchy. Both sites have now been successfully colonised, with numbers gradually increasing year on year.

# Sustainable Restoration

We continue to invest in the restoration and refurbishment of the rural residential portfolio, spending over £5m on repairs, maintenance and improvements to the fabric of our buildings in the past 12 months. Much of our focus has been on improving the energy efficiency of our heritage buildings, eradicating damp and replacing single glazed and uPVC units with hardwood double-glazed windows.

We have also updated the Duchy Design Guide to increase the use of sustainable materials and environmentally friendly building practices, using local and UK suppliers wherever possible. This is already having a positive impact and in a recent restoration project improved the EPC rating of a refurbished 18th century cottage in Yorkshire from F to C. All our refurbishment projects are carefully planned to ensure that we minimise our carbon footprint and reduce waste.



# Lancaster Castle



Our ongoing programme of works to open historic Lancaster Castle up to the public continues to prove popular, with over 200,000 visitors recorded last year. Many of these took part in a guided tour, attended events in the courtyard or at the Police Museum, watched artisans at work in the embroidery studio and stone sculptor's workshop or enjoyed refreshments in our stunning purpose-built café.

A number of small regeneration projects are now underway which will bring more vacant areas and disused buildings back into use. These include the creation of two more workshop units, a much needed upgrade to the existing security office and additional welfare facilities.

On a larger scale, essential repair works will begin later this year to make the medieval Keep wind and water-tight. This will include sensitive repairs to the fabric and windows in the building as well as a new roof and the installation of gutters and downpipes to cater for higher predicted rainfall patterns. We also hope to be able to open up a small part of the ground and first floors of the Keep to the visiting public.

All of our proposed works have been approved by Lancaster City Council and Historic England, who are supportive of our ambition to protect the Castle for future generations.

In preparation for the major works, archaeologists commenced excavation works earlier this summer, unearthing a small number of Roman coins under the Execution Yard in the process. Further investigation and verification of the finds are ongoing.



# Improving Energy Efficiency In Our Buildings



We have recently completed the refurbishment of Unit 2 Centenary Park, Salford, Manchester. The building was constructed in 2006 and has been owned by the Duchy since construction. It became vacant in September last year when the original tenant decided not to renew their lease as the building was surplus to their requirements. The refurbishment works commenced in early January 2023 and completed on 12th May.

The works included repair, refurbishment and redecoration throughout, including the roof and the industrial floor. The offices were refurbished with new ceilings and carpets. A package of sustainability works was included which has improved the EPC rating from 'C' to 'A'. This included the installation of an air source heat pump heating and cooling system within the offices, together with heat recovery ventilation units providing fresh air. Electric water heaters were installed and the original gas boilers were removed. LED lighting was installed throughout with automatic lighting controls and automatic daylight dimming in the warehouse. Six 7kW Podpoint electric vehicle chargers were installed for the use of the future tenant, their staff and visitors.

# Duchy Council

Sir James Leigh-Pemberton CVO has been appointed Chairman of the Duchy of Lancaster Council. He succeeds Sir Alan Reid GCVO who stepped down from the Council in July after five years' service as Chairman and 15 years as an ex-officio member of Council in his capacity as Keeper of the Privy Purse to Her Late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II (2002 to 2017).



Sir James is a highly experienced and respected finance professional who served as Receiver General of the Duchy of Cornwall from 2000 until his retirement in 2021. A former Managing Director of Credit Suisse, Sir James also served as Chairman of the Government-owned UK Financial Investments, and Deputy Chairman of its successor organisation UK Government Investments from 2013 to 2022.

We are also delighted to welcome to the Council the current Secretary and Keeper of the Records for the Duchy of Cornwall, Mr Alastair Martin, and the former Senior Partner of Knight Frank, Mr Alistair Elliott, who joined us at the start of the year. Alastair Martin now chairs our Rural Committee and Alistair Elliott chairs our Urban Committee.

# A+ Rating At Tower Bridge



In line with the Duchy's long-term sustainability plan, the Urban team has been looking at ways in which we can improve the energy efficiency of our commercial and industrial buildings. They are aiming to secure our first EPC A+ rating with their proposals for a full refurbishment of Unit A at Tower Bridge Business Park in London. Work has already commenced on the refurbishment, which will incorporate the installation of photovoltaic units on the roof, as well as the creation of electric vehicle charging points and new cycle storage facilities and showers to encourage more sustainable travel.

The team is also proposing additional landscaping and the installation of bird boxes to enhance the biodiversity and wildlife habitats on the site. This will include the planting of 20 new trees and other native species, achieving a biodiversity net gain improvement calculated as 20% on habitat units and 100% on hedgerow units. As part of the project, we will be installing 24 swift nesting bricks in order to increase the availability of nest sites for this declining species, in line with the objectives of the Southwark Council Nature Action Plan. Works are due to complete in January 2024.

# Working With The Community

Last year, the Duchy's rural restoration team secured planning permission for two projects designed to enhance the long-term viability of a rural village located at the heart of its Whitewell Estate in Lancashire.



Developed in consultation with the local community, the plans include the conversion of redundant agricultural buildings into small workshop and storage units for local businesses, as well as the creation of a Community Hub building which will include a shop, post office, café and information centre on the site of a former petrol garage and forecourt. The local community is actively engaged and very supportive of the proposals and none more so than pupils at the local primary school.

The youngsters at Thorneyholme RC Primary School are taking a keen interest in the building works as they begin. They have received a number of visits and safety talks from members of the team and are monitoring progress on a regular basis. Their latest project has been to design a series of posters which they feel represent the character of their village which have been used to decorate the hoarding around the construction site.

# A Fond Farewell

Our Lancashire farming tenants, staff and members of Rural Committee attended a formal dinner at the Inn at Whitewell at the end of March, where we took the opportunity to bid a fond farewell to our former Clerk of Works, Tom Wells, after 46 years' service. We wish Tom a long, healthy and very happy retirement.



# New Additions to the Duchy Team



We continue to invest in the skills and experience of our in-house team with a number of key appointments over the last 12 months.

**Shoab Anwari** joined the finance team as Financial Controller in October last year and rural surveyor **James Pyrah** joined the estate management team in January 2023.

**Jonathan Murrin** took up the post of Chief Finance Officer of the Duchy at the start of the year. A chartered accountant with over 20 years' experience, Jonathan has held a number of leadership positions in the commercial property sector during that time. Immediately prior to joining the Duchy, he led financial and commercial workstreams charged with the delivery of Lendlease's largest UK development project, Silvertown, in London's Royal Docks.

**Mark Coombs** was appointed Head of Rural Investment in February 2023. A former student of Rural Enterprise and Land Management at Harper Adams University, Mark has spent his career working within rural estates, including Brudenell (Northamptonshire), Buccleuch (Queensberry) and Bolitho (Cornwall).

Senior Project Manager **Adam Brooks** was appointed to the Rural Restoration team

in June and our latest recruit is Rural Secretary **Robyn Bebbington**, who provides support to the teams managing our Staffordshire, Southern and Yorkshire Surveys.

In addition, the President of the Institute of Chartered Forestry, **Geraint Richards**, has been retained as a consultant to provide expert advice and guidance on our woodland management plans, while the Past President of the International Institute of Risk & Safety Management (IIRSM) **Clive Johnson**



provides oversight on our health and safety compliance and standards. We

also continue to work closely with **Dr David Cope** on the delivery of our sustainability objectives.



## Getting to know...

### Shoab Anwari

#### What is your role within the Duchy?

I have a varied and exciting role that requires me to interact with colleagues across the Duchy. My core responsibilities include the preparation of financial statements and management reports, and overseeing day-to-day financial operations.

#### What does a typical day entail?

My working week tends to be a roller coaster ride. On some days I'll have my head down, focussing on one or two priority tasks. This typically happens when there's a reporting deadline to meet. On other days, I'll be jumping between several tasks, whilst also attending meetings and responding to enquiries. Very occasionally, I'll catch up at home, but only after the bedtime stories have been read!

#### What do you do to relax?

Spending quality time with my family. This might entail playing with my children, taking

my wife out for dinner, helping my mother with household tasks, or simply talking and listening to them all. Whatever we do, time spent with them is precious as it helps to keep me grounded and encourages a healthy work-life balance.

#### Who would your ideal dinner guest be?

My great-grandfather. He passed away when I was only four years old. I remember him as a very warm and affectionate individual. I wished he'd lived longer. Over dinner, I would get him to share details of his life. He was orphaned at an early age and grew up on the streets of Mumbai, taking on all kinds of menial jobs. He managed to get a job on a steam ship as the Engineer's assistant, and then travelled to Iran, where he worked and lived on an oil field for a while. Eventually, he ended up in Tanzania, where he settled down, got married and set up an engineering business. What a journey!



#### What super power would you most like to have?

Mind-reading, so that I can always stay several steps ahead of the game. I'd particularly like to read the minds of my 2-year old son and 6-year old daughter. That way I'd be able to avoid them creating a trail of destruction around the house, or having a melt-down over something seemingly inconsequential!

#### What's the best piece of advice you've ever been given?

From my late father: 'Be patient and persistent.' Taking this on board, I've realised now that life is not only about what you accomplish, but more importantly, what you overcome.