



# **Curlew Recovery South Lakes**

## **Annual Report**

### **2024-2025**

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Registered Charity No. 1201723

[linktr.ee/curlewslakes](https://linktr.ee/curlewslakes)  
[curlewrecoverysl@gmail.com](mailto:curlewrecoverysl@gmail.com)

# A Word from the Chair

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I am pleased to share this report on the second full year for the charity - Curlew Recovery South Lakes.

The success of our small charity reflects the terrific support from local people, farmers, gamekeepers, donors, funders, volunteers, bird ringers and curlew experts.

In 2024 we had our best year to date, fledging more chicks than ever, expanding our operations geographically and continuing to support other new curlew groups.

If we can continue this success, we can prevent the loss of our local breeding curlew, and, in time, restore curlew populations in the South Lakes.

❖ **Barny Sykes, Chair, Curlew Recovery South Lakes**



Barny Sykes, right with  
Susannah Bleakley, Trustee.

# Among the Leading Projects in the UK

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- ❖ In the 2024 breeding season, CRSL monitored 24 pairs and recorded 18 - 20 chicks fledge. This is a huge increase on the previous years. If this fledging success was repeated over a number of years, it would be enough to stabilise the population.
- ❖ These results mean that CRSL is among the leading curlew conservation projects in the UK and reflects the amazing efforts of farmers, gamekeepers, fieldworkers and donors.





# Excellent Fieldwork

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- ❖ For the first time in 2024, CRSL had seasonal paid fieldworkers. This was crucial in helping us to find, protect and monitor more nests.
- ❖ The paid fieldworkers were supported by a significant grant from Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) which recognized the success of CRSL's volunteer work to date.
- ❖ We continued to innovate and test new methods – notably moving from fence at full clutch to fence on find. And working with Warwick University to develop real time remote acoustic listening devices.





## Curlew Recovery South Lakes (CRSL) Background

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- Curlew Recovery South Lakes (CRSL) was registered as a charity on 26 Jan 2023.
- It grew from the work of dedicated volunteers working in their local community to help curlew survive and thrive. The farming community and relationships between the group and the farmers have always been central to our work.
- CRSL is recognised as a leading volunteer-led curlew conservation programme, with operations centred on the Lyth Valley, and a growing network across South Lakes.
- CRSL continues to innovate and test novel technologies, having been one of the first to trial thermal drones in 2020 and 2021 and using Canvis for mapping in 2024.



# Conservation Activities

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Core to our work is locating and fencing nests. Curlews breed in farmland and the nests are vulnerable to predation and can be damaged by agricultural operations.

At the start of the season, we hold survey days to bring volunteers together and start the process of nest finding.

Once nests are located, they are fenced with the permission of farmers. Nest cameras and thermal loggers are used for monitoring.

When chicks hatch they are ringed by professional bird ringers and colour flags used when available. Each family is then monitored by volunteers locating the birds from a distance each day.



# 2024 - Our Best Breeding Season

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20 nests found and fenced



24 broods monitored



45 chicks hatched

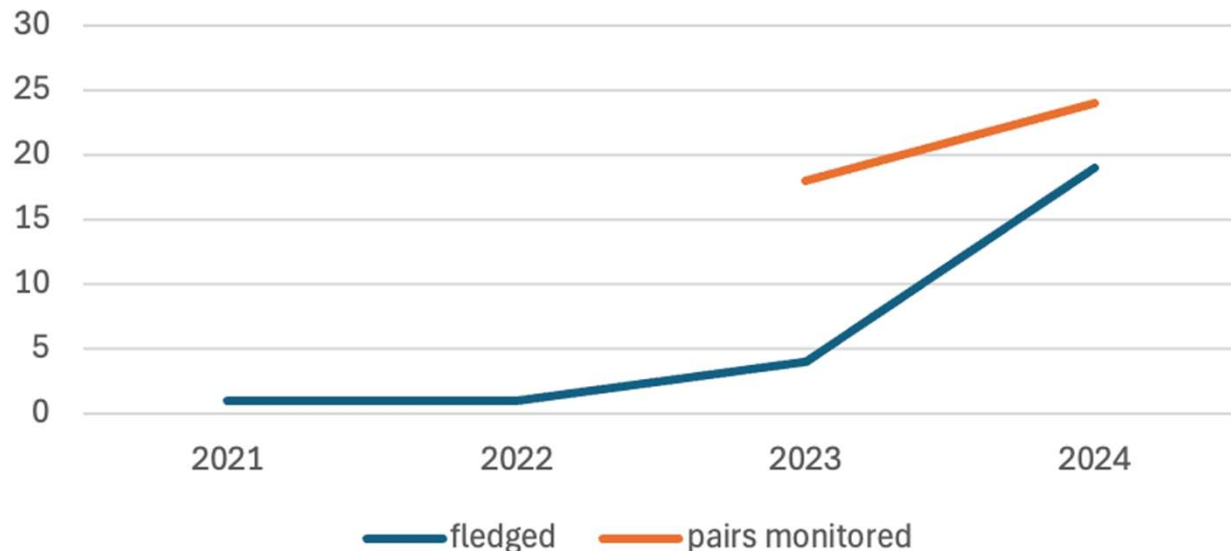


18-20 chicks fledged



# Significant Jump in Fledging Numbers

4 fledged in 2023  
18-20 fledged in 2024



18 - 20 chicks fledged in 2024, compared to only four in 2023, and perhaps only one, in each of the previous years.

To maintain a stable population, 0.6 chicks must fledge from each pair of adults.

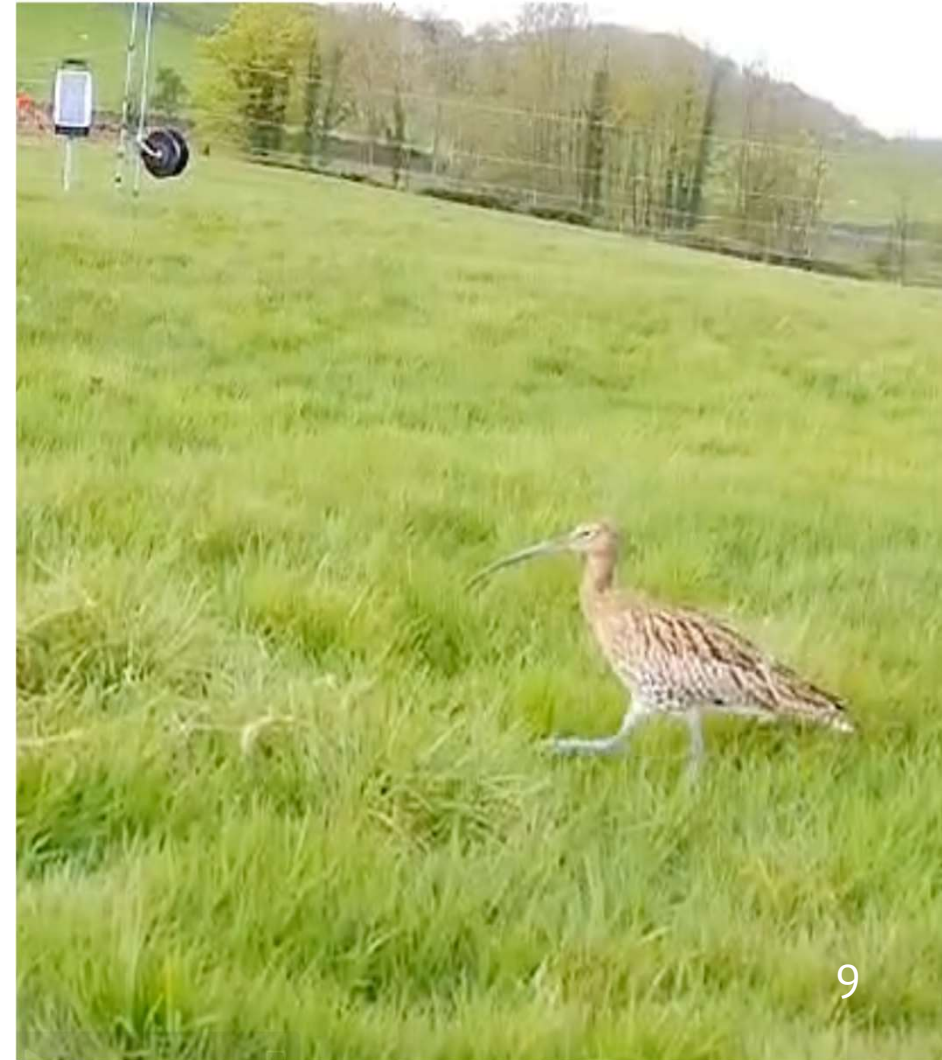
In 2024, a minimum of 18 fledged chicks from the 24 pairs monitored by CRSL. This is 0.75 chicks per pair.

It was our best year yet, and enough, if repeated over future years to restore curlew populations in South Lakes.



# More Nests Found, Fewer Predated

- More nests found than in previous years: 18 nests in 2023, 20 nests found in 2024.
- 3 nests lost to predation. 2 suspected lost to crow; 1 lost to a stoat. The nest cam footage of the stoat attack was widely shared on social media.
- Severe storm (extreme rainfall event) on night of 22-23 May, tested birds just before hatching, one nest was lost.
- Volunteers monitored each curlew family daily giving high confidence in fledging numbers.
- Significant jump in fledging numbers up to 18 – 20 fledged compared to just 4 in the previous year.



# Success Factors

- 2 seasonal fieldworkers paid by Farming in Protected Landscapes gave a boost to capacity which was critical to success.
- The volunteer fieldworkers are growing in skills, commitment and numbers.
- Targeted predator management with local gamekeepers worked well. Fewer nests lost to predation (3 vs 5 in 2023).
- ‘Fence on find’ rather than wait for full clutch was a success – no nests lost to abandonment after fencing.
- Engagement, awareness and farmer liaison were crucial to success.

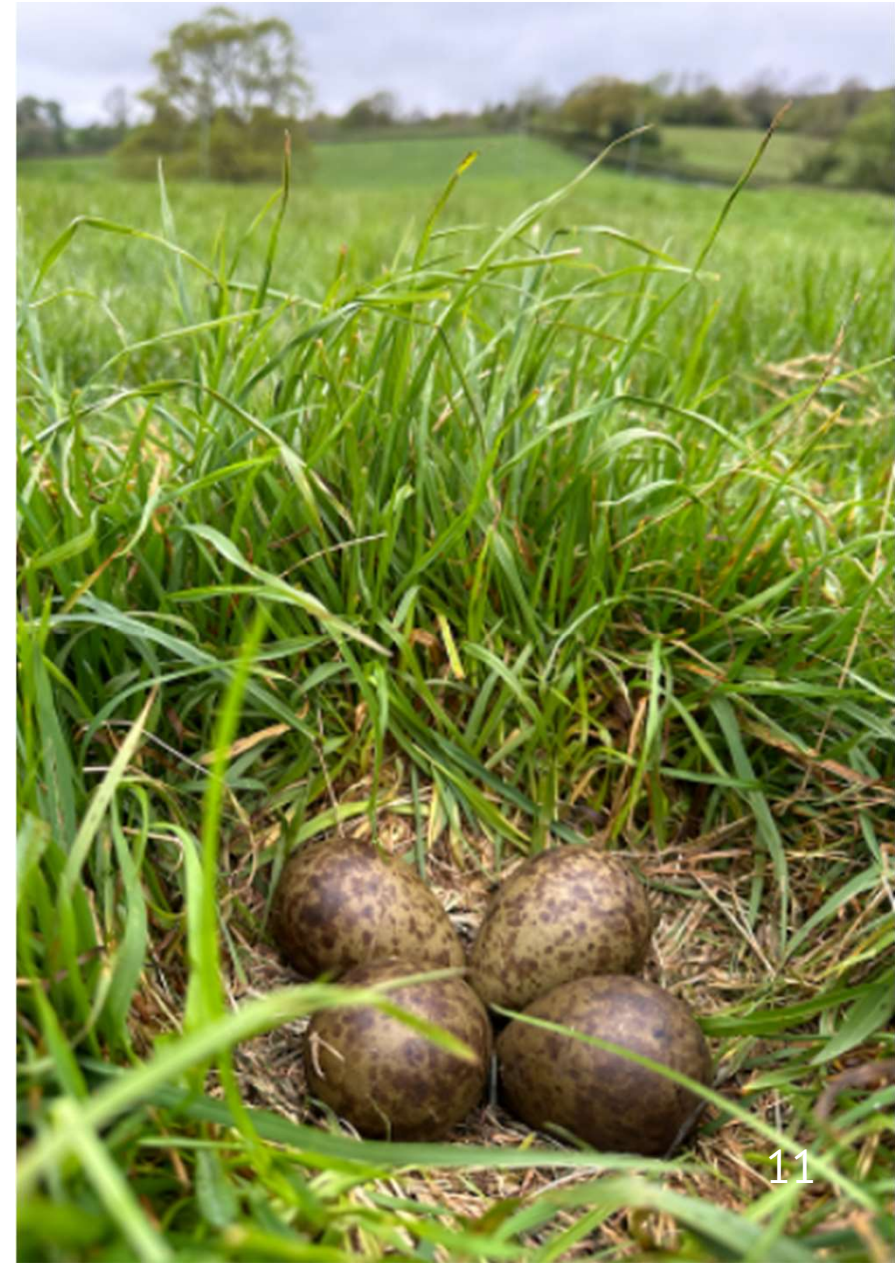




# Curlews and farmland

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- ❖ Our fledging results in 2024 were the best from any comparable project in lowland farmed landscapes.
- ❖ We have demonstrated that curlews can breed successfully in farmland... if there is great support from farmers, funders and committed volunteers.
- ❖ Mike Smart, founding trustee at the national Curlew Action programme, said, “you are the only project to have affirmed that curlews can breed in farmland, and you say so with conviction!”
- ❖ This is incredibly important, as otherwise, in future, breeding curlews will be restricted to reserves, and kept land.





# Chick 105 Re-Sighting

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Hatched and fledged from a field near Burneside, we were excited that this colour-tagged chick was spotted or re-sighted as it's called on 16 September 2024 on the Calf of Man. The curlews that breed here, migrate west to spend the winter in Ireland, France, Portugal, Spain and some in the UK.



# A Five-Egg Nest - All Hatched Successfully

Most curlew nests have four eggs, sometimes only three, with second nests when the first nest has been lost. Five eggs is certainly unusual and was a first for us. Happily, all five hatched successfully.

This nest generated a lot of debate about what was going on. Experts concur that the most likely explanation is egg dumping, where the eggs are from more than 1 female.





# Engagement, Raising Awareness

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We were featured by Fiona Morley Patterson on ITV Border News, increased our following to over 590 on Facebook, gave 14 talks to local groups, took part in a Cumbria Girl Guide curlew camp, displayed at Kendal Museum's Cry of the Curlew exhibition, made regular reports in the local Parish News, gave 3 school talks and spoke at national curlew forums.





# 3 Awards at the North of England Curlew Awards

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In August 2024 we were delighted with the i) Young Conservationist Award: Samuel, Charlie and Ben Taylor, ii) Best Volunteer: Barny Sykes and iii) Special Commendation in the Cumbria Project category.

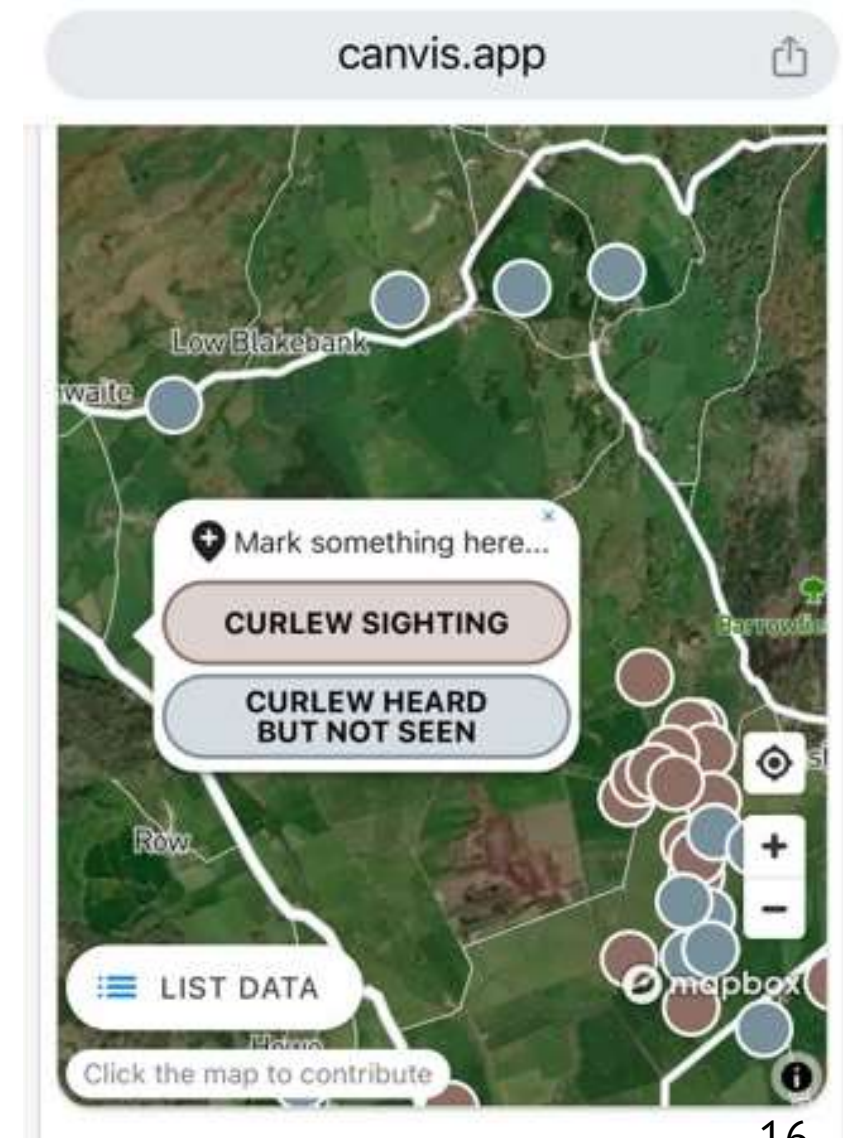


# Use of Technology 1

## Canvis Mapping

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❖ **Canvis** is an app-based mapping tool that we used in 2024 to allow anyone to share records of curlew sightings and where curlew had been heard. Early season this helped to map and pool records from the community and our fieldworkers. Thanks to Matt Sanderson of Furness Mapping Services for developing the interface for us pro bono.



## Use of Technology 2

### Acoustic Listening Devices

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- ❖ Devices have been used to record and identify curlew alarm calls in the field, **but not in real time**. Previously, devices and data were collected at the end of the breeding season.
- ❖ Working with David Jarratt and Warwick Agritech, we ran a research project funded by Halpin Trust to develop a device that would identify a curlew alarm call in the field, send a **real-time** alert to a mobile phone, and record the type of call - e.g. predator alarms, territorial calls, contact calls.
- ❖ Monitoring curlew families with chicks is extremely time consuming. A remote listening device could save hours of field work and may be more accurate in detecting the presence of chicks, as observers cannot be present round the clock.





## Acoustic Listening Device

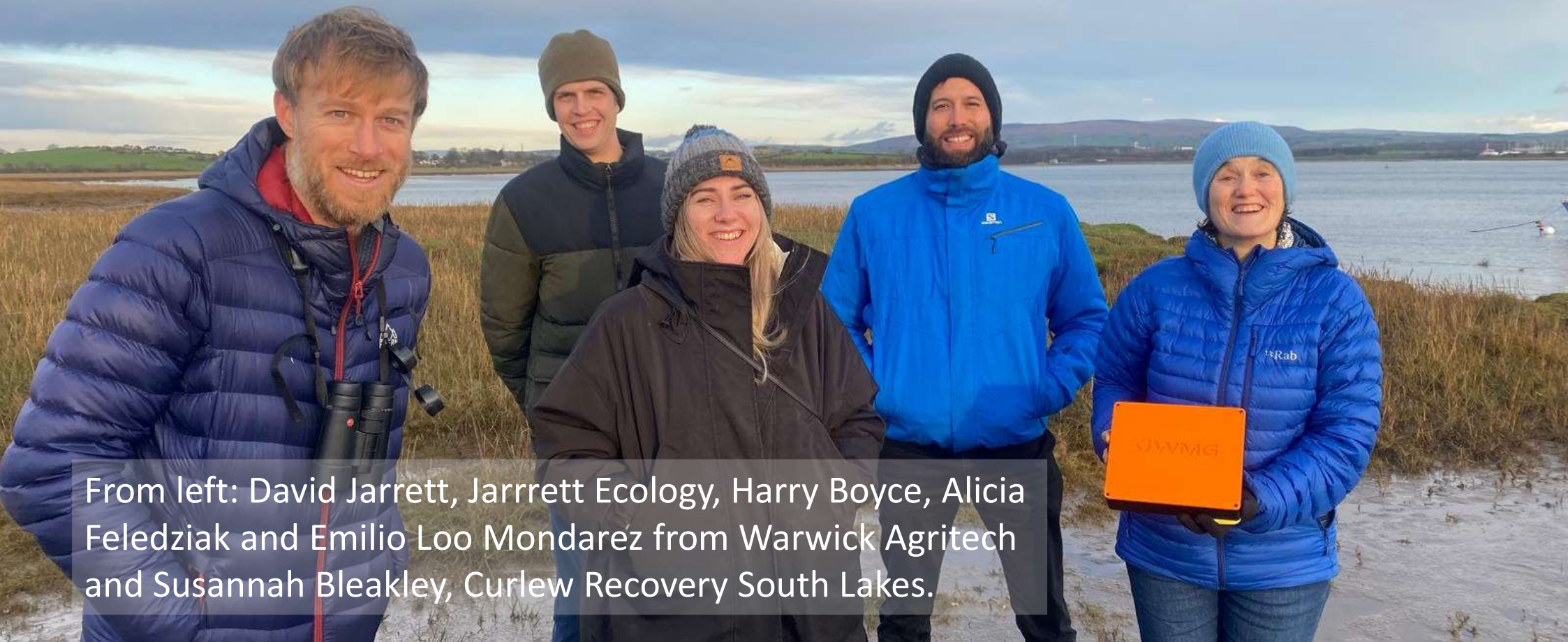
# Result - Prototype Device Built & Successfully Field Tested

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- ❖ A prototype device was built by Warwick Agritech. This used the curlew call classifier that was created by Jarrett Ecology and BTO.
- ❖ The device uses a Raspberry Pi and transmits real time data over the internet. During field testing it successfully identified the different curlew calls.
- ❖ Further development is needed. It could save hours of fieldwork and transform our ability to track and monitor curlew families.



# Acoustic Listening Device Research Team, Sunderland Point, 19 November 2024



From left: David Jarrett, Jarrett Ecology, Harry Boyce, Alicia Feledziak and Emilio Loo Mondarez from Warwick Agritech and Susannah Bleakley, Curlew Recovery South Lakes.



## Acoustic Listening Device

# Future Developments 1

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**Power** - The device needs a reliable power source to run in the field for 4 months.



**Network** - testing was done with a Wi-Fi phone hotspot. It would need a sim card with connection in the field.



**Casing** – a durable field case that is waterproof while not interfering with the function of the microphone.



**Microphone** - testing different configurations, directionality, range, etc.





## Acoustic Listening Device

# Future Developments 2



**Notifications** - the frequency should be customisable - e.g. notify every positive record, or hourly/daily.



**Dashboard** - A functional dashboard needs development to plot and analyse results.



**Field testing** – New components must be tested in field environments to ensure reliability.



**Scaling** - increasing production as the research proves the devices' reliability, moving from prototype.



External warwickagritech@gma...  
<no sender address>  
(No subject) Tue 15:00  
Curlew call type 1 has been dete...



External warwickagritech@gma...  
<no sender address>  
(No subject) Tue 14:56  
Curlew call type 1 has been dete...



External warwickagritech@gma...  
<no sender address>  
(No subject) Tue 14:56  
Curlew call type 1 has been dete...



External warwickagritech@gma...  
<no sender address>  
(No subject) Tue 14:54  
Curlew call type 2 has been dete...



External warwickagritech@gma...  
<no sender address>  
(No subject) Tue 14:40  
Curlew call type 4 has been dete...

# Looking Ahead

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- ❖ Curlew Recovery South Lakes aims to build on the success of previous years including by:
  - extending the geographical area of operation,
  - developing the volunteer team, recruiting and training new volunteers and
  - testing and developing new technologies.
- ❖ The charity has a team of skilled volunteers and has benefitted from FiPL funding this year.
- ❖ To make our work more sustainable, and support long-term curlew breeding success, we need funding for further development of the remote listening devices and technical skills in the use of thermal drones.





# Generous Friends – Thank you

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A successful FiPL (Farming in Protected Landscapes) bid transformed our equipment and capacity with seasonal fieldworkers, and additional nest fencing kits and monitoring equipment.

## Grants and Donations:

- £15,825 from 37 individuals
- £1,299 from
  - Underbarrow Parish Council
  - Kendal Rotary
  - B4RN Crook
  - Cumbria Girlguides, Operation Curlew
- £11,500 from the Halpin Trust.
- Award of over £150K over two years from FiPL to supply equipment for long-term use and seasonal staff.



# Financial Summary

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## Period Ended 31 March 2025

### Receipts:

• Capital grants	£39,937
• Revenue grants	£68,864
• Donations	£17,124
Total receipts for the period:	£125,925

### Payments:

• Conservation delivery cost	£83,839
• Equipment costs	£36,485
Total payment for the period:	£120,324

Cash carried forward from 2024: £2,317

Cash at bank at end March 2025: £7,918





# Trustees – Curlew Recovery South Lakes

❖ The trustees for this period were: Barny Sykes, (Chair), Sue King and Susannah Bleakley (Joint Secretary), David Sharpe (Treasurer), Stephen Wilkinson and Richard Griffith (RG joined Jan 2024).



# Curlew Recovery South Lakes (CRSL)

Volunteers working in their community to help curlew survive and thrive.  
Without this work, curlews will be lost as breeding birds in our landscape – the calls of curlews will no longer echo through our valleys in Spring.

Our sincere thanks to all the local people, farmers, gamekeepers, donors, funders, volunteers, bird ringers and curlew experts who support our work.

[linktr.ee/curlewslakes](https://linktr.ee/curlewslakes)  
[curlewrecoverysl@gmail.com](mailto:curlewrecoverysl@gmail.com)  
Registered Charity No 1201723

Photo: Kelly Powell







**Report to the trustees/  
members of**

Curlew Recovery South Lakes

**On accounts for the year  
ended**

31 March 2025

**Charity no  
(if any)**

1201723

**Set out on pages**

1-4

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended

**Responsibilities and  
basis of report**

As the charity trustees of the Trust, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

**Independent  
examiner's statement**

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention (other than that disclosed below \*) in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act or
- the accounts do not accord with the accounting records

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

*\* Please delete the words in the brackets if they do not apply.*

**Signed:**

**Date:**

01/12/25

**Name:**

Christopher Brown

**Relevant professional  
qualification(s) or body  
(if any):**

ICAEW

**Address:**

Brown & Co (Kendal) Limited

Libra House, Murley Moss Business Village

Kendal, LA9 7RL

Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight matters of concern (see CC32, Independent examination of charity accounts: directions and guidance for examiners).

**Give here brief details of any items that the examiner wishes to disclose.**





Curlew Recovery South Lakes		1201723		CC16a
Receipts and payments accounts				
For the period from	04/01/2024	To	31/3/2025	

## Section A Receipts and payments

	Unrestricted funds to the nearest £	Restricted funds to the nearest £	Endowment funds to the nearest £	Total funds to the nearest £	Last year to the nearest £
<b>A1 Receipts</b>					
FIPL capital grants	-	39,937	-	39,937	44,509
FIPL revenue grant	-	68,864	-	68,864	8,160
Donations :					
Gift Aid	531	-	-	531	563
Other	16,593	-	-	16,593	7,007
<b>Sub total (Gross income for AR)</b>	<b>17,124</b>	<b>108,801</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>125,925</b>	<b>60,239</b>
<b>A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).</b>					
		-	-	-	
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Total receipts</b>	<b>17,124</b>	<b>108,801</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>125,925</b>	<b>60,239</b>
<b>A3 Payments</b>					
Insurance	603	91	-	694	378
Small equipment purchases	1,068	-	-	1,068	590
Stationery, postage and office expenses	808	1,108	-	1,916	120
Consultancy fees	11,500	64,464	-	75,964	6,757
Travel expenses	923	1,137	-	2,060	422
Room hire	-	106	-	106	17
Habitat works	-	515	-	515	-
Camera service plans	-	786	-	786	-
Training	-	230	-	230	-
Storage	-	500	-	500	-
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>14,902</b>	<b>68,937</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>83,839</b>	<b>8,284</b>
<b>A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)</b>					
Equipment and habitat protection	-	36,485	-	36,485	49,638
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>36,485</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>36,485</b>	<b>49,638</b>
<b>Total payments</b>	<b>14,902</b>	<b>105,422</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>120,324</b>	<b>57,922</b>
<b>Net of receipts/(payments)</b>	<b>2,222</b>	<b>3,379</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>5,601</b>	<b>2,317</b>
<b>A5 Transfers between funds</b>	<b>3,580</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>2,317</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>A6 Cash funds last year end</b>	<b>5,802</b>	<b>2,116</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>7,918</b>	<b>2,317</b>
<b>Cash funds this period end</b>	<b>5,802</b>	<b>2,116</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>7,918</b>	<b>2,317</b>

## Section B Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period

Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B1 Cash funds	Bank	5,802	2,116	-
			-	-
		-	-	-
	<b>Total cash funds</b>	<b>5,802</b>	<b>2,116</b>	<b>-</b>
	(agree balances with	OK	OK	OK


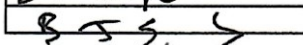
	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B2 Other monetary assets	Prepaid insurance	-	-	-
	FIPL capital grants	-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-

	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
B3 Investment assets				
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-

	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use	Equipment and habitat	Restricted	84,449	-
	Equipment and habitat	Unrestricted	1,674	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-

	Details	Fund to which liability	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)
B5 Liabilities and guarantees	Accountancy Fees	Unrestricted	600	
			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	

Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees

Signature	Print Name	Date of approval
	DAVID K SHARPE	9/12/25
	B S SYKES	9/12/25





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**On accounts for the year  
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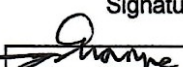

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