

# Happy 100th Captain Tom

SENDING OUR THANKS AND BEST WISHES TO THE NHS FUNDRAISING HERO



# Eskdale & Liddesdale Advertiser

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## BRIEFING

### NEWS

#### Big benefits for community



THE delivery of digital skills in Langholm and a new kitchen for Ewes hall are just two of the projects to be aided by the Ewe Hill 16 windfarm community benefit fund.

Full story: Page 4

### NEWS

#### A look around at life in lockdown



As Eskdale and Liddesdale face an extended period of lockdown with the rest of the UK, the E&L Advertiser speaks to residents.

Full story: Centre Pages

### SPORT

#### Quiet time in the racing yard...not!



THE horses are having a quiet time but the staff are busy at James Ewart Racing's yard near Langholm.

Full story: Page 24

# Nature wins in £6m sale of special moor

## Buccleuch agrees deal to sell 10,500 acres to the community

**A PRICE tag of £6m has been put on more than 10,000 acres of land in Langholm being sold by Buccleuch.**

The company has agreed a deal with the Langholm Initiative to sell the land to the community.

If it goes ahead, it will be the biggest community buy-out in southern Scotland and have a massive impact on the town's ability to determine its own future.

The 10,500 acres includes nine residential properties.

The plan will be the first in which a community positions the environment and climate change at the heart of the decisions it makes.

The central aspect of the plan is the creation of the Tarras Valley Nature Reserve, which will deliver community regeneration, climate change action, ecological restoration, wildlife conservation and develop outdoor tourism.

The ambition has met widespread support. Both locally and nationally 23 organisations have written letters of support.

Cross-party political support from MSPs Oliver Mundell, Conservative; Colin Smyth, Labour; and Joan McAlpine, SNP, has been shown as well as support from the John Muir Trust, Scottish Natural Heritage, RSPB Scotland, Woodland Trust, Forest and Land Scotland and Borders Forest Trust.

The Moor's cultural importance is celebrated annually by the Common Riding which



The Tarras Valley Nature Reserve is part of an ambition by the Langholm Initiative to transform the moor

marks the boundaries of the historic common land.

### Heritage

The land has national and international natural heritage, being both a Site of Special Scientific Interest and a Special Protection Area for breeding hen harriers, the most persecuted bird of prey in the UK.

Kevin Cumming, project leader, said: "This is one of the most important and forward-thinking community plans in the UK.

"We're in a climate emergency and the decisions we make now will have a massive impact on

future generations.

"We have worked extremely hard for six months to get to this stage of the process. It has been a positive experience working with Buccleuch and we're excited to try and get the buyout over the line."

Some of the other plans include planting nearly 500 acres of native woodland, peatland restoration work, developing modern business units and creating an eco-campsite.

Last month the Initiative applied to the Scottish Land Fund for £3m and approached South of Scotland Enterprise to support

the purchase.

Kevin added: "Southern Scotland lags far behind the Highland and Islands in the support it has received for community land ownership.

### Issues

"This is despite facing many of the same issues such as an ageing population, youth migration and loss of industry."

It is hoped the remaining money will be found through a large-scale crowd-funding campaign which is likely to kick off in May. The Initiative is also pursuing other sources of funding.

Kevin said: "This project ex-

tends beyond the community because of its positive climate action.

"We raised £8,000 in eight days through a crowd-funder to help us undertake our investigations into community ownership.

"These donations came from all over the world. It's rare that we, as individuals, have the opportunity to make a difference on this scale and we hope people will support us."

A Buccleuch spokesperson said: "We've worked closely with the Initiative on the potential sale of land, including areas of Langholm Moor, and these are progressing well.

"We hope we will reach a positive conclusion before the end of this year."

Gavin Graham, chairman of Langholm Walks, said: "I have just spent an hour on the moor watching two male hen harriers hunting.

"It is the best place in mainland UK to watch these beautiful birds.

"Buying the moor is so important for the future of these beautiful birds and will, if properly managed as I am sure it will, be a magnet for people looking for wildlife experiences in such beautiful countryside.

"Given time, Langholm can become a major destination for wildlife enthusiasts and an education centre for young people to learn about the habitat we have on our doorstep."

>Turn to Page 2