**2024/2025 Strategy for the Berwickshire Marine Reserve**

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Berwickshire Marine Reserve  
The Hippodrome, Harbour Road, Eyemouth, TD14 5HT

Scottish Registered Charity: SC050016

<https://www.berwickshiremarinereserve.org.uk/>

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# **1. Introduction**

The Berwickshire Marine Reserve (BMR) is a registered Scottish charity which was established in 1984. It seeks to conserve the Berwickshire coastline which spans the Scottish Borders region. BMR is the only voluntary marine reserve in Scotland.

This document updates a high-level strategic plan which was developed in late 2022.

The organisation has recently refreshed its strategy to reflect its changing strategic environment and shift in leadership. The challenges presented by climate change have become very evident and are in the foreground of BMR’s strategy. Furthermore, the need to align itself with the conservation priorities and policies of the Scottish Government has become evident. Finally, the trustees have recognised that BMR must be more ambitious in its approach if it is to continue to have a meaningful impact on the conservation of the Berwickshire coastline.

This strategy sets out the strategic direction and priorities of the organisation. These are unlikely to shift for the next few years. In contrast, the suggested projects and goals are designed for the upcoming fiscal year from March 2024 to February 2025 - these are likely to change as this strategy is updated each year.

# **2. Purpose and main objectives**

BMR’s constitution defines its purposes as follows:

* The advancement of education,
* The advancement of the arts, heritage, culture, or science, and
* The advancement of environmental protection and improvement.

Furthermore, this constitution says that it must achieve this by:

* conserving and enhancing the biodiversity of the local coastal waters and coast, and
* promoting awareness of the marine environment and its sustainable recreational and commercial use through research, education, interpretation and engagement.

In order to achieve the broad mandate from above, this strategy is currently focused on five main objectives which drive projects and other planned activities, and which collectively move BMR towards the mandate laid out in its founding documents.

The main objectives of this strategic plan are therefore as follows:

1. Conserving the voluntary marine reserve that stretches from the historic fishing town of Eyemouth and encompasses the coastal village of St Abbs.
2. Leading nature recovery and restoring the biodiversity of the shoreline and coastal waters.
3. Monitoring changes in local biodiversity and sea conditions, especially the impact of climate change and economic activity on these ecosystems.
4. Engaging local communities in conservation and environmental efforts and educating them about the importance of coastal biodiversity and ecosystems.
5. Encouraging sustainable recreation and economic activity in this coastal region so that they benefit both local communities and the environment.

The Berwickshire Coast is home to a remarkable and truly unique mix of marine life not found elsewhere in the UK.

In its local environmental leadership role BMR will support and contribute to the delivery of the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals, especially to SDG 14 ‘Life below water’. The SDG Programme increasingly influences and shapes national and local policies and strategies. As such the activities of BMR align with national priorities such as the 2020 Challenge for Scotland’s Biodiversity and Scottish Climate Change Adaptation Strategy 2019-2024 and local policies such as the Scottish Borders Council’s Council’s Council Plan 2023 ‘Clean Green Future’ ambition - tackling climate and nature emergencies, SBC’s Priorities 23/24 to ‘accelerate action to adapt to and mitigate the effects of climate change’ and the Priority Local Actions for Berwickshire by ‘Support(ing) community led initiatives that contribute to tackling climate change and nature loss’.

# **3. Unpacking the five interrelated objectives**

These five objectives help to focus BMR’s work and **represent its ambition**. While they are stated individually, **these objectives overlap and are interrelated**. BMR is already delivering some of these activities and intends to expand them. There are also some new activities that BMR hopes to do in future.

**Objective 1: Conserving the voluntary marine reserve that stretches from the historic fishing town of Eyemouth and encompasses the coastal village of St Abbs.**

***Rationale****: There is no official or regulatory designation of this marine reserve, although it is recognised by Marine Scotland and appears on some maps of environmental areas in Scotland. It exists because stakeholders such as divers, fishermen and local communities have agreed to treat it as a reserve and not take anything from it or damage it in any way. This means that BMR must continue to liaise with these and other stakeholders to ensure that this coastline is treated as such.*

**Sub-objective 1.1:** BMR will continue to engage with local stakeholders such as recreational divers and fishermen, and local community members, to uphold the 1984 commitment and not damage or remove anything from this region of the coastline. This engagement takes the form of workshops and meetings with interest groups.

**Sub-objective 1.2:** Furthermore, BMR will continue to communicate through its website, social media and face-to-face interactions that this coastline is a voluntary marine reserve and why this is especially significant.

**Objective 2: Leading nature recovery and restoring the biodiversity of the shoreline and coastal waters.**

***Rationale:*** *Biodiversity is constantly under threat from an array of sources, both man-made and environmental. Ecosystems can easily be damaged by things like pollution and invasive species. Small changes in biodiversity can distort and undermine our precious ecosystems.*

**Sub-objective 2.1:** BMR will continue to conserve the Berwickshire shoreline through advocacy and working with volunteers. Such activities include but are not limited to removing litter, encouraging recycling, monitoring pollution, repairing walking paths and removing invasive species.

**Sub-objective 2.2:** BMR will explore the development of new approaches to local marine and coastal habitat management, e.g. rewilding, and explore the ecosystem interconnection between terrestrial and marine environmental management through a pilot programme to inform a local environmental strategy.

**Objective 3. Monitoring changes in local biodiversity and sea conditions, especially the impact of climate change and economic activity on these ecosystems.**

***Rationale:*** *Ongoing monitoring is integral to designing and improving strategies to protect the environment and against human and environmental impacts. There is a shortage of local datasets that are accessible and have sufficient rigour to be used by scientists, government officials and charities such as BMR itself. Citizen science is also a good way to engage and educate community members.*

**Sub-objective 3.1:** BMR will continue to work with community volunteers and universities to monitor and record changes in biodiversity and coastal conditions, understand the cause and implications of these changes, and create datasets that can be used for scientific research and advocacy on these subjects. These are citizen-science projects.

**Sub-objective 3.2:** BMR will also disseminate this information through its online media and enable these datasets to be downloaded through its website. Furthermore, BMR will add to existing datasets of organisations such as Marine Scotland’s Data Portal.

**Objective 4. Engaging local communities in conservation and environmental efforts and educating them about the importance of coastal biodiversity and ecosystems.**

***Rationale:*** *Communities are integral to efforts to conserve the environment and protect against climate change, not only on the Berwickshire coastline, but also throughout Scotland. Local communities are also stakeholders in the Berwickshire coastline and must therefore be appropriately consulted by local councils, charities and businesses. BMR must be community-focused in its work and strive to educate and involve community members wherever possible.*

**Sub-objective 4.1:** BMR will have a Marine Education Centre where communities and tourists can learn more about the coast and its biodiversity.

**Sub-objective 4.2:** BMR must work with local schools and other charities to encourage local communities to develop an appreciation of the coastal environment, its biodiversity and complex ecosystems, and also its vulnerabilities. Furthermore, BMR will use these partnerships to encourage outdoor activities with others.

**Sub-objective 4.3:** BMR should embrace technology to communicate its message. This technology might include live webcams that stream coastal and undersea images, a 3D virtual model of the ocean floor developed into a virtual environment using computer game technology, live sea metrics on their website, and educational Facebook and Instagram posts.

**Sub-objective 4.4:** BMR must strive to involve community members in its monitoring, conservation and restoration activities since this will increase their knowledge of these fields, enables them to get outdoors and experience nature, and creates opportunities to find companionship through working together and finding a common cause.

**Objective 5. Encouraging sustainable recreation and economic activity in this coastal region so that they benefit both local communities and the environment.**

***Rationale:*** *There is a delicate equilibrium to be achieved between the environment and economic activity. On one hand, reckless economic activity can damage the environment but on the other hand, responsible economic activity can help to protect and restore the environment. Responsible economic activity can also provide valuable job opportunities and income for communities while helping people to appreciate the environment and what it has to offer.*

**Sub-objective 6.1:** BMR will support and invest in eco-businesses along the Berwickshire coastline, and their efforts to investigate their feasibility and viability, and to consult with local communities. Such businesses may include seaweed farms (including processing), aquaculture (e.g. fish, crustaceans, and molluscs), coastal eco-tourism (e.g. tours, walking paths), renewable energy (e.g. wind and hydro) and hospitality (e.g. restaurants with unique local kinds of seafood).

**Sub-objective 6.2:** BMR will work with visitors, businesses and local communities to encourage sustainable recreational activities along the Berwickshire coastline. This will include diving and angling in permitted areas, and activities like birdwatching, hiking, camping, kayaking and sailing.

**Sub-objective 6.3:** Furthermore, BMR will operate responsibly and mitigate any negative impact on the environment. For example, BMR aims to achieve Carbon Net Zero by 2027.

# **4. SWOT Analysis**

To be an effective organisation and deliver core objectives, BMR must be fully aware of the operational environment and the challenges and opportunities which will impact on organisational performance. The SWOT analysis, below, will be used to inform and guide this strategy and future projects.

| **Strengths** | **Weaknesses** |
| --- | --- |
| * Staff skills and knowledge * Staff professional qualifications * Good communication skills * Strong partnerships with relevant organisations * Enthusiasm and drive to develop the organisation. * The historical legacy of the organisation * Only VMR in Scotland * Engaging will all communities, stakeholders and user groups | * Attracting and managing volunteers * Further training for volunteers and staff * Committee run – governance issues * Communication – up-to-date and inclusive * Business management experience * Marketing and PR * Generating funds needs to have a strategy of self-funding |
| **Opportunities** | **Threats** |
| * Community consultation – developing a feeling of ownership of the marine environment * Develop new approaches to conservation management throughout the Berwickshire Coast, increasing inclusivity along the coast and inland * Good promotion strategy * Linking up with other marine conservation organisations and sharing knowledge * Using new technology to promote the marine environment and its conservation * Employ new technology in data collection * Development of exciting and inclusive projects, creating the opportunity for people to get involved | * Miscommunication * Misunderstandings by user groups or community * Dwindling enthusiasm * Not delivering on projects * Funding shortfalls * Lack of engagement and consultation alienating communities. * Ensuring the organisation adheres to current Legislation |

# **5. Performance in 2023/24**

The high-level strategic plan developed in late 2022 established a performance matrix to ensure that BMR can demonstrate its impact and can learn from its experiences and improve what it does.

The table, below, sets out a range of performance indicators for 2023/24 and reports on the delivery over the past year.

**Communications:**

| **Indicator** | **Target (2023/24)** | **Performance** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Website page views | 11,000 | 9731 |
| Bounce rate from website  (people who left site after 1 page view) | 25% | 54% |
| Facebook followers | 4,300 | 4343 |
| Engagement with FB Posts  (likes, comments, shares) | 8,000 | 4900 |
| Instagram followers | 1,350 | 1283 |
| Newsletters published | 4 | 5 |
| News releases/articles | 8 | 6 |
| Promotional campaigns | 4 | 4 |

**Engagement:**

| **Indicator** | **Target (2023/24)** | **Performance** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| People attending exhibitions and events | 3,250 | 3451 |
| Educational sessions with school groups | 30 | 26 |
| Public sessions | 26 | 35 |
| People attending public sessions | 400 | 836 |
| Member meetings/consultations with organisations and individuals | 100 | 168 |

**Activities:**

| **Indicator** | **Target (2023/24)** | **Performance** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Volunteer sessions | 20 | 54 |
| Regular participants in volunteer sessions | 132 | 430 |
| KG of litter picked up from beach cleans | 129 +/- 10% | 702 |
| Beach cleans | 16 | 16 |
| Citizen science events | 12 | 15 |
| Participants at citizen science events | 60 | 119 |

**Achievements during 2023/24:**

Establishment of a new BMR Board of Trustees

Creation of new suite of marketing and promotional materials - BMR Leaflet, ‘Discover the BMR and the Beautiful Berwickshire Coast’, ‘A Guide to Recreational Activity’, ‘Ocean Immersion’ promotional video.

Coordination of a Volunteer Programme delivering a series of participatory conservation tasks, e.g. beach cleans, nurdle hunts and clearance of invasive non-native species.

Delivery of a ‘citizen science’ environmental monitoring programme including a community ‘Bioblitz’ environmental audit.

Completion of the Berwickshire Lobster Hatchery project which attracted 3451 visitors to exhibitions and events held in the Marine Education Centre.

Appointment of a new BMR ‘Head Ranger’ post to coordinate the delivery of a Summer Ranger programme supporting a range of activities for visitors to the area.

Development and publication of ‘Ocean and Carbon Literacy’ learning resources and the delivery of a schools outreach programme offering marine experiments to explain coastal and marine climate change.

Attendance at a range of local shows, events and exhibitions and meetings with the local MSP and Cabinet Secretary for Net Zero and Just Transition.

Contribution to local regeneration ambitions, e.g. Eyemouth Town Team and Eyemouth Place Plan, and to the developing marine and coastal policy agenda.

# **6. Impact strategy**

**Main objective:** To achieve the main objectives of BMR through well-designed and effective projects.

Some of these projects will have a definitive end and be linked to a grant contract, while others will roll over and continue indefinitely.

The funds to implement these projects will either come from grant funders, community donations or from BMR itself. Some projects may also generate revenue for BMR as they sell products or provide services to eco-tourists or organisations such as the Scottish Government.

BMR will remain aware of the policy and funding environment so that it can develop and market projects that align with these external priorities.

**Proposed projects:**

Below are the projects that BMR will seek to implement in its upcoming financial year (March 2024 to February 2025), subject to the availability of funds. Some of these projects have been ongoing while others are new projects that will need to be launched. A key project for 2024 will be the commemoration of the designation of the Voluntary Marine Reserve in 1984.

| **Project 1** | **Community Led Environmental Action** |
| --- | --- |
| **Status** | * An active project that commenced in March 2024. |
| **Associated BMR objectives** | * 1,2,3,4,5 |
| **Project description** | * The project will support the coordination and delivery of a volunteer and community participation programme through citizen science activities and conservation and environmental tasks along the Berwickshire Coast. * The project will deliver a series of ‘discovery’ events and activities to raise the profile of the BMR and the Berwickshire Coast, attract a wider range of interests to the area and encourage volunteering and community participation. |
| **Environmental impact** | * Local communities and visitors are more aware of the marine habitat and coastal environment, and the challenges faced by these ecosystems. |
| **Social impact** | * Increased participation opportunities for individuals, community groups and local businesses to undertake conservations and environmental activities and interact with the volunteers and each other. |
| **Economic impact** | * Increased local economic activity as the profile of the Berwickshire Coast is raised and local environmental ‘attractions’ promoted to encourage visitors to spend more time in the area and spend money on local goods and services. |

| **Project 2** | **Conservation Volunteers** |
| --- | --- |
| **Status** | * Active project since January 2022 although volunteers have been informally involved over the past two decades. |
| **Funding arrangements** | * Part funded through the Community Led Environmental Action project * Funding has been secured for the provision of new/replacement survey equipment * Additional funding/sponsorship to be sought for the delivery of challenging tasks |
| **Associated BMR objectives** | * 1,2,3,4 |
| **Project description** | * This project recruits, trains and works with volunteers on several conservation activities (e.g. beach cleans, nurdle hunts, removing invasive species), citizen science activities (e.g. Shorewatch) and educational activities (e.g. guided walks, Marine Education Centre). * Aims to expand regular and committed volunteers from 6 to 12 people. * This is a core project which BMR has run for several years, though in an informal manner. |
| **Environmental impact** | * Marine and coastal habitat conservation and restoration throughout the Berwickshire Coast. |
| **Social impact** | * Opportunity for like-minded people to meet up, learn more about the environment, get some exercise and fresh air, and be part of conservation activities. |
| **Economic impact** | * Access to volunteers with the appropriate skills, experience and enthusiasm. * A coastal environment that is more attractive to visitors. |

| **Project 3** | **BMR 40th Anniversary Celebrations** |
| --- | --- |
| **Status** | * Project in development phase, led by BMR volunteers |
| **Funding arrangements** | * Grant funding/sponsorship to be secured in total or in part to support specific events and activities as part of the programme of birthday celebrations. |
| **Associated BMR objectives** | * 1,2,3,4,5 |
| **Project description** | * This project will deliver a series of events and activities open to the public as part of the commemoration of the establishment of the voluntary marine reserve and to celebrate conservation work, volunteering and community participation. |
| **Environmental impact** | * The opportunity to celebrate conservation work undertaken throughout the Berwickshire Coast and consider future approaches to marine and coastal environmental management. |
| **Social impact** | * Local volunteers, community groups and organisations and businesses given the opportunity to come together to celebrate their participation in undertaking coastal and marine conservation activities. |
| **Economic impact** | * Significant opportunity to raise the profile of BMR and the Berwickshire Coast. * Opportunity to market and promote BMR visitor services and support local nature based businesses and the development of eco-tourism. |

| **Project 4** | **Summer Rangers** |
| --- | --- |
| **Status** | * Active project for several years, though 2022 was the first year that rangers have been employed and paid by BMR. |
| **Funding arrangements** | * Funding has been secured for 2024 from the Hamish and Doris Crichton Charitable Trust. |
| **Associated BMR objectives** | * 1,3,4,5 |
| **Project description** | * This project will employ aspiring conservationists and provide them with temporary employment over the 2024 summer. * The Rangers will be actively involved in tour guiding, leading conservation tasks, community outreach and education. This will give them valuable work experience which will help them to find future work in this field. * Rangers collaborate with other conservation organisations and improve their relationships with BMR. * This is a repeat of the 2023 Summer Ranger project though the potential to evolve/extend the project will be explored. |
| **Environmental impact** | * Improved conservation in the marine reserve. |
| **Social impact** | * Local communities and tourists have an improved understanding of the coastal and marine ecosystems, and an opportunity to participate in conservation activities. |
| **Economic impact** | * Revenue for BMR from paid tours led by the rangers. * Rangers are more skilled and experienced and likely to find future work in the conservation or eco-tourism fields. |

| **Project 5** | **Schools Outreach** |
| --- | --- |
| **Status** | * Developed through the creation of ‘Ocean Literacy’ learning resources and ‘in school’ marine experiments which have helped to communicate marine and coastal climate change. |
| **Funding arrangements** | * Funding secured for initial programme delivered to local primary schools * Proposals submitted to maintain and extend the programme delivery area. * Funding has been secured to deliver an introductory programme for schools throughout Berwickshire. |
| **Associated BMR objectives** | * 3,4 |
| **Project description** | * This project will deliver and build on the ‘Ocean Literacy’ learning resources creating an educational programme on marine conservation and climate change that schools can integrate into their curricula. * The project will be developed to include a mobile laboratory that can be taken to schools with microscopes, low-tech chemicals, and portable displays of marine life for targeted schools without the means to take their children to the coast. |
| **Environmental impact** | * Children treat the environment with more respect and have a better understanding of environmental and climate change. |
| **Social impact** | * Engages young people in conservation and environmental issues and makes their existing subjects more exciting. |
| **Economic impact** | * N/A |

| **Project 6** | **‘Discovery’ Events and Activities** |
| --- | --- |
| **Status** | * Project in development phase. |
| **Funding arrangements** | * Associated with the Community Led Environmental Action project * Additional funding/sponsorship to be sought to increase the scope of activities and events |
| **Associated BMR objectives** | * 3,4,5 |
| **Project description** | * The project will develop a broader events and activities programme to enable a wider audience, of varied interests to ‘discover’ the BMR and the Berwickshire Coast. This will build on recent activities, e.g. ‘Ocean Immersion’ which seeks to engage new audiences and visitors and helps to support local nature based businesses. |
| **Environmental impact** | * Increases understanding of the area's natural capital, environmental sensitivity including wildlife disturbance - supporting the ‘Codes of Conduct’. |
| **Social impact** | * Increased opportunities for group and community engagement and participation. |
| **Economic impact** | * Supports local nature based businesses and promotes the development of eco-tourism. |

| **Project 7** | **Marine Litter Recycling** |
| --- | --- |
| **Status** | * Project in development phase. |
| **Funding arrangements** | * Funding to be secured |
| **Associated BMR objectives** | * 1,2,4 |
| **Project description** | * This project will conduct research into the reuse, retasking and recycling of marine litter to develop an activity which will be delivered locally. * The project will include sourcing funding for the development of a local marine litter initiative. |
| **Environmental impact** | * Reduction and removal of marine litter from the BMR and along the Berwickshire Coast. |
| **Social impact** | * Improved local environment which encourages people to engage with the environment and participate in outdoor activities. |
| **Economic impact** | * Enhanced local environment maintaining/increasing visitor numbers to the Berwickshire Coast. |

| **Project 8** | **Mult-media materials and promotional materials** |
| --- | --- |
| **Status** | * Ongoing. |
| **Funding arrangements** | * Funding to be secured |
| **Associated BMR objectives** | * 4,5 |
| **Project description** | * This project aims to build on the new BMR promotional and marketing materials, video work and the development of the VR to maintain the currency of communications and attract greater interest. * Explore interactive display development as part of future exhibitions, within the MEC and as a mobile facility. |
| **Environmental impact** | * Improved awareness of the conservation work of BMR and along the Berwickshire Coast. |
| **Social impact** | * People engage with the material in exhibitions, events, and online and become more aware of opportunities to participate in collaborative activities. * People are healthier as they participate in outdoor activities. |
| **Economic impact** | * Increased visitors to the Berwickshire Coast and extended visitor stays which increase the level of spend across the local economy. |

| **Project 9** | **Land/Sea interconnections** |
| --- | --- |
| **Status** | * Project in development phase. |
| **Funding arrangements** | * Funding for development work to be secured. |
| **Associated BMR objectives** | * 1,2,3,4,5 |
| **Project description** | * The project will help to develop an understanding of the ecosystem relationships between the land and the sea, exploring this through the lens of environmental and climate change by providing new educational and interpretive materials and running new experience and discovery events and activities. * The project will enable BMR to attract a wider community audience, of varied interests and help shape a new policy approach to local environmental management, breaking down the barriers of the current marine and terrestrial policy construct. |
| **Environmental impact** | * Increases understanding of the area's natural capital, environmental sensitivity and the challenges of environmental and climate change. |
| **Social impact** | * Increased opportunities for group and community engagement and participation in environmental action. |
| **Economic impact** | * Supports local nature based businesses and promotes the development of sustainable and eco-tourism within the area. |

| **Project 10** | **Environmental Visitor Centre** |
| --- | --- |
| **Status** | * Project in development phase. |
| **Funding arrangements** | * Funding for feasibility study to be secured. |
| **Associated BMR objectives** | * 4,5 |
| **Project description** | * The project will involve BMR establishing/leading a partnership/consortia of local environmental organisations to explore the development of a new/enhanced visitor attraction reflecting the marine and coastal habitats and the environment of the Berwickshire Coast. * This project arises from local discussions, led by South of Scotland Destination Alliance, where tourism operators have identified the need for a new ‘wet weather’ visitor attraction. * Through running the Marine Education Centre over the past two summer seasons BMR have established that there is a visitor ‘market’ with interest in exploring the local environment. |
| **Environmental impact** | * Increases understanding of the area's natural capital, environmental sensitivity and the challenges of environmental and climate change. |
| **Social impact** | * Increased opportunities for group and community engagement and participation in activities and events. |
| **Economic impact** | * Supports local nature based businesses and promotes the development of sustainable and eco-tourism within the area. |

# **7. Monitoring and evaluation strategy**

**Main objective:** To ensure that BMR can demonstrate its impact and can learn from its experiences and improve what it does.

**Goals for next year (2024/25):**

**Goal 1.** To continue to work with local environmental partner organisations and support the delivery of citizen science activities to help develop and maintain a robust local environmental evidence base to accurately inform future environmental strategy and policy development.

**Goal 2:** To develop a wider range of environmentally focussed activities and events to attract a broader audience and help to address community environmental priorities and further explore local environmental issues, e.g. environmental/climate change impacts, mitigation and adaptation.

**Goal 3:** To contribute and facilitate the development of community led approaches to conservation and environmental management and explore the applicability and adoption of refreshed environmental management models, e.g. rewilding.

**Goal 4:** To develop new environmental education materials, resources and activities supporting engagement with schools and the general public and develop approaches to reduce environmental pollution and reuse, retask and recycle marine litter.

**Goal 5:** To contribute to the development and delivery of local regeneration initiatives and projects which contribute to the economic/social/environmental sustainability of the area, e.g. Eyemouth Town Team, Eyemouth Place Plan.

**Supporting info and reasoning:**

To effectively deliver commitments and develop future approaches to work, BMR must monitor and analyse its impacts both quantitatively and qualitatively. This will demonstrate relevance and impact. It will also help to appreciate and reflect the perception of the organisation from participants and the local community.

The table, below, sets out a range of performance indicators which will enable BMR to monitor the progress of organisational objectives in achieving BMR’s core purposes. These indicators are separate from individual project targets but are, in part, an aggregation of project outputs. These indicator impacts, which reflect planned delivery in 2024/35, will be recorded annually, unless otherwise stated, by BMR staff.

**Communications:**

| **Indicator** | **Baseline (2023/24)** | **Target (2024/25)** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Website page views | 9731 | 10500 |
| Facebook followers | 4343 | 5000 |
| Engagement with FB Posts  (likes, comments, shares) | 4900 | 6000 |
| Instagram followers | 1283 | 1500 |
| Newsletters published | 5 | 4 |
| News releases/articles | 6 | 6 |

**Engagement:**

| **Indicator** | **Baseline (2023/24)** | **Target (2024/25)** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| People attending exhibitions and events | 3451 | 1500 |
| Educational sessions with school groups | 26 | 18 |
| Participants at school sessions | 732 | 360 |
| Public sessions | 35 | 20 |
| People attending public sessions | 836 | 240 |

**Activities:**

| **Indicator** | **Baseline (2023/24)** | **Target (2024/25)** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Volunteer sessions | 54 | 30 |
| Participants in volunteer sessions | 430 | 300 |
| KG of marine litter collected | 702 | 700 +/-10% |
| Citizen science events | 15 | 20 |
| Participants at citizen science events | 119 | 152 |

# **8. Marketing and communications strategy**

**Overall objective:** To ensure that BMR is well-known and highly regarded for its work and that its communications are attracting suitable partners and valuable opportunities.

**Goals for next year (2024/25):**

**Goal 1.** To maintain the currency of the BMR website. This website will clearly explain BMR’s purpose and objectives, educate people and explain how people can get involved in the organisation’s activities.

**Goal 2.** To implement a social media strategy that enables BMR to use Facebook and Instagram effectively and increase the promotional video content available from the website.

**Goal 3.** To send out four quarterly newsletters to subscribers.

**Goal 4.** To acknowledge the contributions of sponsors and grant funders in all related communications.

**Supporting info and reasoning:**

Effectively communicating BMR’s purposes and objectives is central to raising the profile of the organisation and building its brand. This recognises that the organisation engages with a range of audiences through a variety of media and that communications need to be current and appropriately tailored to the target recipients.

The table below describes how BMR will use its various communication tools to build its brand and engage with its community.

| **Communication Tool** | **Plans for 2024/2025** |
| --- | --- |
| Website and social media | BMR hosts a website and supports social media via Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. As the principal ‘shop window’ for the organisation, this must convey a simple yet powerful message. An uncluttered homepage is needed which describes the organisation and its work. This must direct visitors to additional supplemental information such as providing updated project content about new activities.  The provision of ‘news’ and current information should be made by using Facebook and Twitter. Instagram will be used to provide and share pictures and imagery, engaging with those willing to share their photographs of the area. |
| Newsletter | A quarterly electronic newsletter will continue to be produced by the organisation detailing current issues, activities, and events. This is circulated to those subscribing to receive the newsletter. |
| Printed materials | BMR has a range of printed materials, a main leaflet describing the work of the organisation and a series of project-related publications. A main introductory leaflet/guide will be refreshed/developed, as needed, to reflect the environmental status of BMR and its work with a positive message for users to discover and enjoy the reserve responsibly. |
| Press and media | Regular local press and media coverage are important in maintaining the local profile of BMR and media articles will be generated to both promote and report on the organisation's activities. It is especially important to publicly acknowledge any funding from grant-aiding bodies. |
| Events | BMR delivers and promotes a range of events with the local community, marine users, and coastal visitors. These events are highly valuable in engaging the local community in active conservation and visitors in experiencing the area. A programme of events will be developed which is evenly distributed across the year to be manageable and provide more regular news-worthy promotional content. This will help to maintain BMR’s public profile. |

# **9. Fundraising strategy**

**Overall objective:** To attract a healthy mixture of restricted and unrestricted funding in the form of grants and donations, which enable BMR to make long-term plans and implement an effective set of projects.

**Goals for next year (2024/25):**

**Goal 1.** To secure a minimum £60,000 of grant income.

**Goal 2.** To raise £5,000 in donations.

**Supporting info and reasoning:**

BMR must continue to raise donations and grant funding to finance its activities. Donations are altruistic gifts of money, support, or time to an organisation or community where the giver derives no direct or indirect personal benefit. Donations may be conditional or unconditional. In contrast, grants are given to organisations in response to a funding proposal. Grants tend to be restricted funding.

The table below explains how BMR will attract donations and grants in 2024/2025.

| **Funding type** | **Plans for 2024/2025** |
| --- | --- |
| Donations | Donations are an important source of unrestricted funding for BMR and recognition of public support for the work of the organisation. All public events and activities must effectively communicate BMR’s work and seek public donations. It must be easy for people and organisations to make donations through the collection boxes and an online donation platform that also manages Gift Aid. |
| Grants | BMR must be aware of the changing policy environment at the national and local levels and the effects this has on the evolution and development of funding regimes.This includes the need to work with Third Sector Interfaces and maintain access to appropriate funding databases.  Appropriate fundraising training will be sought for BMR staff to ensure the required skills and knowledge are held by the organisation.  Future fundraising proposals will be developed on a cost-centre basis with full cost recovery of staffing costs and overheads with project delivery scheduled within an overall programme of works to maximise the productive capacity of the staff team.  Securing grant funding is increasingly challenging. It is therefore important that BMR establishes and maintains a reputation for effectively delivering project commitments on time and within budget, and grant funders are referenced in press releases and social media posts to show BMR’s appreciation for their contributions. |

# **10. Partnership strategy**

**Overall objective:** To engage and collaborate with a range of organisational partners to contribute to BMR’s work.

**Goals for next year (2024/25):**

**Goal 1.** To achievea close working relationship with local statutory and regulatory organisations to ensure BMR is integrated into their strategic policies and developmental programmes.

**Goal 2.** To have environmental organisations (e.g. NatureScot) recognise that BMR’s activities are aligned with their strategic priorities.

**Goal 3.** To establishjoint working projects with local environmental partners (e.g. St Abbs Marine Station, NTS) where BMR’s contribution is funded.

**Supporting info and reasoning:**

Delivering the purposes and objectives of the BMR necessitates working in partnership and collaborating with a range of organisations at both strategic and local levels. These partnerships and joint working relationships may have a specific thematic focus such as conservation or climate change. They may also relate to a geographical area and be focused on things like economic development and regeneration.

Engaging with such partnerships creates the opportunity to influence policy and strategy formation, and to access funding for joint projects. It also improves BMR’s reputation.

BMR will seek to engage and strengthen its partnerships with the following organisations during the year:

* Coastal Communities Network
* BNMNP
* SBC - Ecology
* SBC - Flood & Coastal Management
* SBC - Countryside
* SBC - Communities and Partnerships
* NatureScot
* National Trust Scotland
* St Abbs Marine Station
* Sea the Change
* Abundant Borders
* Tourism Businesses
* Harbour Trusts
* NNG Offshore Wind / EDF Renewables
* South of Scotland Destination Alliance
* South of Scotland Enterprise

# **11. Organisation design strategy**

**Overall objective:** To design a capable organisation that has the right people in the right positions, and where everyone works together constructively.

**Goals for next year (2024/25):**

**Goal 1.** To have employed a team of staff consisting of an Executive Director and two Project Officers with additional staff recruited to deliver funded project specific activities.

**Goal 2.** For all staff, trustees, members and volunteers to be clear on their respective roles and responsibilities.

**Goal 3.** For all staff, trustees, members and volunteers to feel that their contributions are valued and that their feedback is welcome.

**Supporting info and reasoning:**

The effective implementation of the BMR Strategy will be driven by the coordinated work of several organisational participants.

Ensuring that each participant has the skills, knowledge and capacity, with appropriate support mechanisms in place, will be essential to ensure organisational performance and development.

All organisational participants will be encouraged to play an active role in the promotion of BMR’s work, ranging from volunteers and visitors being encouraged to comment on Facebook posts to Trustees providing a regular article as part of the quarterly newsletter.

Gaining qualitative feedback from organisational participants will be essential to both maintain and build enthusiasm and commitment to the work of the organisation, as well as to increase levels of support and participation. This approach will include Volunteer Briefings and regular volunteer surveys/feedback (6 Months) leading to the development of future Volunteer Programmes.

The development of future iterations of BMR’s work programmes and strategic direction will be informed by consultation with BMR Members through an annual strategy workshop. This will ensure that Members are effectively engaged in organisational development and that a range of specialist and local views help to inform the future sense of direction.

# **12. Conclusion**

This strategy describes how BMR should focus its efforts to achieve its mandate, which is to conserve the biodiversity of the shoreline and waters along the Berwickshire Coast.

It has set out the broad strategic direction for BMR and the rationale behind this. It has proposed key projects that BMR should undertake. Furthermore, it has listed several goals for each area of the organisation - goals which will help move BMR forward in its next financial year (March 2024 to February 2025). These goals can be updated during the year as circumstances change.

This next year promises to be exciting for BMR as it becomes bolder and more ambitious and seeks to rapidly increase its impact to deal with challenges presented by environmental and climate change. Furthermore, 2024 provides many opportunities for volunteers to be part of protecting their precious coastline and the biodiversity it contains.