Carbon Calling 2024

With the Eden Valley as the backdrop, 200 attendees were ushered to their seats to the dulcet tones of the bagpipes. Carbon Calling founders and organisers Nic Renison and Liz Genever welcomed the audience to the third iteration of the event, at Sleastonhow, Kirkby Thore by kind permission of Tim and Emma Nicholson. Nic & Liz introduced the opening event as *Mock the Week* meets *Dragons Den*, cautioning that it was a ‘brave session’ and that we should ‘just go with it’!

It was indeed an energetic introduction to the event – Rob Yorke energetically chairing a rotating panel of pre-warned attendees who posed thought-provoking questions to the audience, which covered renewable energy, testing and data collection, bias, young people, how do we regenerate ourselves, the co-benefits of hedge laying, how we have more in common and more.

Piped back to our chairs after a short break, the energy continued with an engaging presentation from headline speaker, Allen Williams PhD, a sixth generation farmer from South Carolina and co-founder of Understanding Ag. Allen kicked off his talk saying that he had transitioned from starting each day by asking “*What are we going to kill today, what ‘cide are we gonna use?*’ to “*What life systems are we going to support today?*”. He talked about compaction – in the soil and between our own ears, and outlined his 6-3-4 protocol – the six principles of soil health, three rules of adaptive stewardship and four ecosystem processes, backed up with impressive statistics and practical examples which showed how regenerative farming techniques has swift benefits on soil quality, productivity and economics.

A delicious, locally produced lunch of slow-cooked beef tortilla or pulled pork baps followed, with the break gaving attendees to drop in to some sessions including useful kit to bring more biological life to your farm, a fencing demo, a dung beetle safari, a hedge safari and, following on from the key note speech, how mentoring can improve soil health and productivity.

After lunch, delegates chose from a range of workshops – the most popular of which understandable proved to be Allen Williams’ deeper dive into his framework and its application in the field locally, repeated again later for those that missed it. Plus others on making more of hedges and trees, balancing trees and livestock, stocking rates, soil health, composting and water quality.

The day wrapped up with a panel sessions led by AHDB, focussing on converting ideas to actual behaviour change. Around 40 delegates camped over, and the conversation continued over more great food and drink.