



**DURHAM**  
Heritage Coast

**DURHAM HERITAGE COAST  
PARTNERSHIP**

**STEERING GROUP**

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 12 DECEMBER 2013  
VENUE – SEATON HOLME, EASINGTON VILLAGE**

**[Document consists of 10 pages]**

**I PRESENT**

Niall Benson	Durham Heritage Coast
Councillor D Boyes	Durham County Council (Easington)
Darryl Cox	Durham County Council (Countryside)
Gail Craig	Durham Heritage Coast
Chris Evans	Natural England
Colum Goodchild	Northumbrian Water
Louise Harrington	Durham Heritage Coast
Paula Hunt	Ryhope Community Association
Joe Lemon	Ryhope Community Association
James MacLean	Northumbrian Water
Myrtle MacPherson	Easington Colliery Parish Council
Councillor J Maitland	Durham County Council (Murton)
Eddie Mason	Ambassador
Fred Rowe	Steering Group Open Seat Representative
Gary Shears	Durham County Council (Ecology)
Ross Wares	Ryhope Community Association
Florence Wilson	Horden Parish Council
Gareth Wilson	National Trust

**2 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

Eddie Mason, Vice-Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

**3 BRIAN ORAM**

With great sadness Brian Oram has passed away, always a great supporter and advocate of the coast he will be missed by us all.

**4 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from :

Steve Bhowmick	Durham County Council
Sarah Bowman	Hartlepool Borough Council
Nick Brodin	Natural England
Sue Goodman	Environment Agency
Deborah Jefferson	Hartlepool Borough Council
George Patterson	Ambassador
Nicol Trueman	Sunderland City Council

**5 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

It was agreed that the minutes of the DHC Steering Group Meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> June 2013 were accepted as a true record of proceedings by all present.

## 6 HALLIWELL BANKS LANDFILL SITE

Sue Goodman, Environment Agency (EA) was unable to attend today's meeting so an update had been provided by Sarah Stevenson (EA).

Key Points :

- The site falls within the scope of the Part 2A contaminated land regime.
- The EA is the enforcing authority for the site with a duty to require its remediation.
- The Part 2A regime promotes voluntary remediation. If this does not happen then EA must serve a Remediation Notice requiring remediation.

Update :

- All Appropriate Persons (APs) have now agreed in principle to carry out voluntary remediation (subject to conditions). This is a positive step forward.
- The City of Sunderland Council is proactively seeking to arrange a meeting between all the APs to progress voluntary remediation of the site.
- EA have suggested that each AP nominates a representative to form a Project Steering Group, The aim of this group will be to agree issues such as project governance and project management and to maintain momentum of the project.
- Coastal erosion monitoring carried out in 2013 does not show any significant erosion between the edge of the fill and the cliffs.

Forward Look :

- Further coastal erosion monitoring was planned for 6<sup>th</sup> December but due to the forecast tidal surge this has been rearranged for 16<sup>th</sup> December.
- EA intend to take further water quality samples on 16<sup>th</sup> December of the discharge onto the beach.

(At the June meeting concerns were raised about a discharge coming up through the ground. During site visits EA have not found evidence of any other contaminated discharges coming from the site).

The meeting agreed that this was positive news.

Ed Mason asked the representatives from Ryhope if they had noticed any erosion on site. Joe Lemon reported that things were not looking too bad on site at the moment, the tidal surge had battered the bottom half of the cliffs, not causing too much damage; however there is still the Winter to get through.

Ed Mason asked whether any remedial works would be taking place this Winter. Niall Benson replied that no works would take place this winter and added that

fortunately the ground was not as sodden as this time last year when the recent tidal surge occurred; which may have had disastrous results.

## **7 HERITAGE COAST OFFICER'S REPORT – NIALL BENSON**

### **Business Plan Update – 2013/2014 Q3**

Niall distributed copies of the Business Plan Update for this quarter and ran through the contents.

#### **Coastal Access**

- Final report has been signed off by the Secretary of State.
- Delivery has commenced; route waymarkers will be installed in March (oak posts) and some small scale construction works will take place at Seaham Hall carpark (Natural England funding). Official opening/launch will take place in the Spring.
- Main change is in the Sunderland to Seaham section.

#### **East Area Coastal Interpretation**

- East Area Committee are funding £50k.
- Working with Living History North East, in Ryhope and Hendon on style and content. 6 key points in the Hendon area have been identified as good opportunities for interpretation along the coastal footpath – consultation for this is currently ongoing, Niall will be at Sunderland Central Library with it next week.
- Involvement with schools and community groups – maritime heritage, local history etc.

#### **Little Tern Project**

- 2013 was a bad year with the theft of 50-80 eggs, no fledglings
- EU Life funding has been successful, work is starting now for the coming year – better fencing, engagement support for Little Tern Warden (Community Engagement Officer will be appointed) and a video will be produced. A planning meeting is taking place this week.

#### **Funding**

- Coastal Communities Fund – DCC's 2013 bid was unsuccessful – another bid will be submitted focussing on volunteer development and engagement, support centring around the new Marina, focussing on the creation of new jobs.
- Working on an educational exchange with Finnish Partners
- HLF Bid Crimdon to Denemouth - Informal consultation has taken place regarding Deneholme. Vast majority have favoured road closure due to anti-social behaviour and fly-tipping. Niall will be feeding back results to the Parish Council next week. Process for road closures usually take around 6 months.

- European Maritime and Fisheries Funding - available next year, coast will be included – may be a chance to gain some funding.

### **Coast Watch**

- This initiative is progressing well, launched in May, a review meeting was held last month. It is an extension of Neighbourhood Watch; organisations pooling resources and sharing information – landowners, DCC Street Wardens, Durham Constabulary – the use of established systems is working well. Results have been obtained with 4x4 use, fly tipping, motorbikes, illegal horse grazing along the coast. The group is very enthusiastic and motivated.

### **Litter Free Coast and Sea**

- Corporate groups are coming out litter picking, as well as charities and a local MCS group. This links in with Pride Initiatives. A website diary booking system will be developed.

### **Equine Sector Study**

- Ongoing, this will form part of the Management Plan. There is an opportunity for businesses and growth in this area on the coast

### **Planning**

- Coastal Concordat – Defra et al simplifying planning processes on the coast, less bureaucracy involved for organisations (NWL etc).

### **Policy**

- European Parliament have proposed a directive on ICZM and Spatial Planning, voting takes place today. Niall will be lobbying in favour of coastal management.

### **Management Plan**

- DCC are going to assign a Planning Officer to assist writing this, as the DCC Local Plan references the coast.

### **Valuation of the Heritage Coast**

- Niall will arrange a speaker to give a short presentation on this.

### **Partnership Structure**

- Blackhall Regeneration Partnership have dissolved, which means there is currently no representative (formerly Bass Underwood). Councillor Boyes suggested contacting Alison Patterson, Blackhall Community Association, based at the Community Centre. Niall will speak to Alison

and also the Parish Council about the best way forward for a replacement for Blackhalls.

### **Research Programme (Big Sea Survey 2)**

- Currently working with Newcastle University on a national marine survey. The University currently have an issue with risk management relating to the Programme – this will hopefully be resolved by February and may result in two graduate placements.

## **8 JAMES MACLEAN, NORTHUMBRIAN WATER : BATHING WATER QUALITY**

### **Background**

Levels of bacteria in bathing waters have reduced significantly over the past 20 years . Factors affecting bathing water quality include :

- Streams and rivers – pollution from inland sources;
- Run-off from land, farms and roads;
- Inputs from sewerage and drainage (misconnections);
- Animals on beaches (dog faeces);
- Seabirds (can be large but short term impact);
- Rainfall and climate change – heavy rain can wash bacteria into streams and rivers.

Important to determine the source of pollution to get the right solution.

From 2016 all EU bathing waters will be classified as either Excellent, Good, Sufficient or Poor under the revised Bathing Water Directive (rBWD).

### **2013 Bathing Water Season**

North East Region – 100% met the current BWD Mandatory standard; with 88% meeting the more stringent Guideline standard. Seaham Hall Beach and Crimdon are forecast as Sufficient under the rBWD; with Seaham Beach being Poor. The risk of infection from bathing in designated bathing waters is still very low. In the event of a significant event affecting bathing water quality; such as heavy rainfall, an advisory sign can be displayed to inform bathers as part of beach management activities.

Discussion took place about dog faeces on beaches – there are no by-laws preventing dogs accessing the beaches in the designated Heritage Coast area at any time of the year. This is something that needs to be addressed as beach usage increases.

### **Plans for 2015 – 2020**

Consultation has shown that customers are willing to pay for further improvements to bathing water quality.

Seaham and Seaham Hall beaches – work will commence on a scheme in 2014 to ensure these beaches meet the minimum 'Sufficient' classification. This will incorporate construction of new sewer pipes to deal with rainfall and sewage flows reducing the impact on bathing water quality, particularly from spills into Dalton Beck. Councillor Maitland asked whether development works for Phase 2 of Dalton Park would impact on bathing water quality; James MacLean said this will be taken into account in developing the final scheme.

A summer of good sunny, warm and dry weather, such as 2013, can also assist with killing bacteria in bathing waters. However, this cannot be depended upon and so this scheme is required to improve overall bathing water quality. Ed Mason said Seaham has become an attractive visitor destination and this needs to be corrected as soon as possible, the investment in this scheme to rectify this issue was welcomed.

### **Length of Bathing Water Season- Results of Defra Consultation**

The current bathing water season in England is 15<sup>th</sup> May to the 30<sup>th</sup> September, and is different in other EU countries. A recent Defra survey asked whether the bathing season should be amended. There were 602 respondents, voting heavily in favour of a longer bathing water season (72.4%). The highest collective of respondents to the consultation were private individuals (68.5%) with around 200 respondents from Surfers Against Sewage.

### **Future Targets**

Working in Partnership with other agencies to improve bathing water quality. Current target – 100% meeting Mandatory standard and 90% of bathing waters to meet EU Guideline standard equivalent to the new 'Good' classification under the rBWD.

Longer term target – 100% of bathing waters to meet EU guideline classification 'Good' or 'Excellent'.

## **9 LOUISE HARRINGTON : NATURE TOURISM PROJECT UPDATE**

Leader funded project - this has now concluded.

- Little tern flier – coastal shuttle bus ran during the summer – over 800 trips were made. This encouraged use of the coastal footpath. Funding, if available, may be sought for 2014, there have been a lot of positive comments.
- Leaflets – have now been refreshed and printed (coastal footpath booklet; village walks leaflets covering Seaham, Dawdon and Dalton-le-

Dale, Easington Colliery, Hawthorn and Crimdon. Two more are in the pipeline - Castle Eden Dene and Horden.

- Schools and volunteer engagement – the leaflets which Murton Ribbon School designed have now been produced (a nature walk and a history walk).
- Tourism East Durham – this involves around 8 businesses (this makes up around 25% of all coastal businesses in East Durham). They are all keen on developing this business cluster and keeping it rolling as it provides networking/business opportunities – another meeting will be arranged for February.
- Wildflower Training Days - Durham Wildlife Trust have delivered 3 sessions introducing people to coastal grasslands.
- Transnational project with Finnish partners – present at Low Tide Day, which was a great success, around 1500 attended.

### **Horden Denes Project (Phase 3)**

Ph 1 – sculpture, pathways and interpretation.

Ph 2 – Water treatment works

Phase 3 – new footpath links, seating, parking areas, Education, interpretation, leaflets (village walk, 4m, and Horden Denes booklet). Events will include guided walks, educational walks, history talks – this will all link in with the ‘Love Horden’ project.

Differentia have been commissioned to arrange workshops with local community groups and schools to design interpretation.

A launch event will take place at the end of the project (June 2014).

### **Events 2014**

- Guided walks
- Low Tide Day at Seaham (17<sup>th</sup> May)
- Event at end of National Trust Half Marathon at Crimdon (15<sup>th</sup> June)

Both events will highlight the new coastal path and the Crimdon event will incorporate the little tern project.

- Celebrating our Coast at Dalton Park (July, date tbc).

### **Other Works**

Litter Free Coast and Sea – litter picks are being co-ordinated with ASDA, Seaham, a local group from Seaham and a team of young people not currently in education.

## **10 OPERATION KRAKEN : D.C. SMITH, DURHAM CONSTABULARY**



Project Kraken forms part of the Government's National Counter Terrorism Strategy and includes all aspects of ports policing.

It is a national campaign to educate and increase vigilance within maritime and inland waterways communities.

It encourages people to report any activity that, through their knowledge, stands out as being suspicious. Reporting can be by 999 Emergency No., 101 Police Telephone No. or by emailing a dedicated email address : [durhamteesvalleyairport@durham.pnn.police.uk](mailto:durhamteesvalleyairport@durham.pnn.police.uk)

Definition of suspicious behaviour described as :

- Unusual Presence; numerous persons landing on a remote beach at unusual times of the day;
- Badly handled or poorly equipped vessels;
- Requests to hire vessels from private owners;
- Packages being transferred between vessels;
- Over interest in port infrastructure e.g. fuel points etc;
- Vessels berthed in prohibited areas;
- Signalling to/from the sea (by flashing car headlights etc).

There are many areas of the Durham coastline where a boat can land/gain access landside and threats include large cargo ships; Hartlepool Nuclear Power Station and other such landmarks.

To assist officials who police the port, the Police are more reliant on people who live, work and have an interest in aviation, maritime and inland waterways sites :

- Officials e.g. RNLI;
- Clubs e.g. Yachting clubs, aviation enthusiasts;
- Businesses e.g. Fishermen, Sea front shops, boat hire;
- Private dwellings e.g. Living close to or overlooking vulnerable sites.

Activities Include :

Drug trafficking;  
Organised crime;  
International Counter Terrorism;  
Irish Related Terrorism;  
Extreme Right Wing Terrorism;  
Movement of firearms/weapons.

## 11 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Councillor Maitland said it would be useful if presentations could be made available at the meeting, this can will be arranged.

**12. DATE OF NEXT MEETINGS**

Thursday 20 March 2014;

Thursday 3 July 2014

Annual Forum – Thursday 18 September 2014.