



**Heritage Coast**  
Sunderland-Durham-Hartlepool

# **DURHAM HERITAGE COAST PARTNERSHIP**

**STEERING GROUP**

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 3 JULY 2014  
VENUE – BOROUGH HALL, HARTLEPOOL HEADLAND**

**[Document consists of 9 pages]**

**I PRESENT**

Niall Benson	Durham Heritage Coast
Sarah Bowman	Hartlepool Borough Council
Councillor D Boyes	Durham County Council (Easington)
Darryl Cox	Durham County Council (Countryside)
Gail Craig	Durham Heritage Coast
Tony Devos	Limestone Landscapes
Louise Harrington	Durham Heritage Coast
Matthew King	Hartlepool Borough Council
Myrtle MacPherson	Easington Colliery Parish Council
Fred Rowe	Steering Group Open Seat Representative
Florence Wilson	Hornden Regeneration Partnership

**2 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

Councillor Boyes welcomed everyone to the meeting.

**3 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from :

Steve Bhowmick	Durham County Council
Chris Evans	Natural England
Sue Goodman	Environment Agency
Paula Hunt	Ryhope Community Association
Deborah Jefferson	Hartlepool Borough Council
Joe Lemon	Ryhope Community Association
James MacLean	Northumbrian Water
Cllr J Maitland	Durham County Council (Murton)
Gary Shears	Durham County Council (Ecology)
Cllr C Snowball	Seaham Town Council
Cllr Sylvia Tempest	Hartlepool Borough Council
Cllr S Thomas	Hartlepool Borough Council
Nicol Truman	Sunderland City Council
Ross Wares	Ryhope Community Association
Gareth Wilson	National Trust

**4 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

It was agreed that the minutes of the DHC Steering Group Meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> March 2014 were accepted as a true record of proceedings by all present.

**5 HALLIWELL BANKS LANDFILL SITE**

An update had been submitted by Sue Goodman, Environment Agency (EA).

Since signing the voluntary agreement in March the parties have engaged a consultant who has prepared a specification for the next phase of works. EA are currently looking at this. When this has been agreed a contractor will be appointed to deliver the works on behalf of the parties. EA are continuing to work with the parties to take the voluntary work forward and are hopeful that the site works will take place in late Summer. EA are continuing to monitor the rate of coastal erosion next to Area B and this remains relatively low at an average of 0.55m/year.

Progress with this issue was welcomed.

## 6 HERITAGE COAST OFFICER'S REPORT – NIALL BENSON

### Business Plan Update – 2014/2015 Q1

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

#### Highlights

- The first section of the North East England Coast Path was launched on 12 April at Seaham Hall beach carpark. This project has been delivered by Natural England following the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009. This section runs from North Gare, Hartlepool to South Bents in Sunderland, route markers are substantial oak posts in rural areas. The event was well attended and speeches were delivered by the Mayor of Sunderland, the Mayor and Leader of Hartlepool Borough Council, the Mayor of Seaham Town Council and the Vice Chair of Durham County Council. Access is now much improved and more 'joined up', there is no longer a gap between Seaham and Sunderland. Looking forward we need to think about whether we promote this and how this will be done as well as how it will be used. From this a new National Trail Partnership has been formed, DHCP are to act as the Lead Body (Secretariat) for this – if anyone would like to be part of this please contact Niall.
- Water Quality – the previous year's samples had been detrimentally affected by rainfall quantities, as there had not been as much rainfall this year samples have been good. It is hoped that the three Durham beaches affected will have electronic forecast signage, with the facility for text alerts. Defra will provide one sign, NWL the other two.
- Litter Free Coast and Sea/Beach Care – this is improving all the time. Seaham Beach and Seaham Hall beach are regularly cleaned by the Seaham Beach Clean Crew. ASDA at Seaham are continuing with their 365 bag challenge (collecting 365 bags of rubbish over a 12 month period) at Red Acre beach, picking up in excess of 20 bags last week. Other groups have taken part in beach cleans – Marks and Spencer and the British Autism Society. This links in with 'Pride' initiatives. A

website diary (booking system to manage groups going out) is being created, and training will be offered (currently being procured).

- **EVENTS** - Low Tide Day, held on 17 May at Seaham Hall beach carpark. This year DHC linked up with East Durham Creates, an Arts Council funded arts engagement project. Input was also given from the Limestone Landscapes Partnership. A very well attended event, 150 people alone attended the rock pool ramble. Other events had included an event to celebrate the Durham Coast half-marathon at Crimdon and Celebrating our Coast at Dalton Park. The Team also planned to attend Ryhope Carnival, Seaham Carnival, Seaton Carew Fun Day, support the 'Big Watch' weekend and continue with various guided walks throughout the year.

## **Funding**

- East Area Coastal Interpretation – East Area Committee (Sunderland City Council) are providing £50k and Limestone Landscapes are providing £10k to provide interpretation at key points on the England Coast Path. Niall has been working in Hendon and Ryhope with Living History North East on style and content of interpretation which will see 15 new panels (Wearmouth Bridge to Seaham). Differentia Ltd. have been appointed as the Contractor, interpretation will be manufactured locally in Hendon.
- Coastal Connections – working with Sunderland City Council on future activity and sources of funding.
- Coastal Communities Fund Phase I (submitted by Durham County Council) – totalling £3.5m, DHC would receive around £200,000 for volunteer development and engagement. Bid failed last year, awaiting for news this year.
- Erasmus – for outdoor education (transnational) – pilot bid submitted to work with Finnish colleagues, outcome awaited.
- HLF for Durham Coast NNR.
- European Maritime and Fisheries Fund
- Big Lottery Fund with DWT on Beach Schools engagement project for the whole coast.
- EU LIFE Little Tern Project – funding granted for €0.5m, working with Natural England and Hartlepool BC at Crimdon. Durham County Council volunteers have been on site and erected fencing this year which has seen around 100 birds breeding with plenty of food source. Trevor has been on site with additional presence from Amy (appointed by INCA as Community and Engagement Officer). Niall will ask for a presentation on the Little Terns at this year's Forum. The LIFE programme have

requested separate agreements for INCA and DHC working arrangements.

- HLF Horden Project – phase 3 is currently being delivered (Louise Harrington to report later); completion is scheduled for the end of September – Phase 4 development is now underway.
- M. King asked if any funding was obtained from planning applications from Local Authorities – disturbance to wildlife from development plans. Niall agreed to send on Durham County Council's recreational data to Matthew.

## **Research**

A research programme will be established supporting a national bid from Newcastle University to extend the Big Sea Survey, which is now complete. Bidding is also taking place for a PhD with Durham University on microalgae and metals. A research programme for all aspects of the coast will be included in the Management Plan.

## **Coast Watch**

This is an extension of Neighbourhood Watch, working with landowners, Street Wardens and Police using existing established systems. Over 100 people have already signed up. Results have principally focussed on illegal vehicle access.

## **Denemouth Barrier**

After a formal consultation process, a barrier has been installed to combat illegal flytipping.

## **Planning**

EU Directive on Maritime Spatial Planning – land/sea interaction.

Coastal Concordat – this is a Defra led initiative for consenting development in the marine environment

Local Plans – Hartlepool, Durham and Sunderland.

## **Water**

- Water Quality previously covered.
- DHC are a Partner in Wear Catchment Partnership
- DHC are leading the coastal streams sub-catchment partnership, the first meeting will be early September which will offer wider improvement links.

### **Management Plan**

- A draft will be circulated by the end of August, the plan will link to Local Authority Local Plans, water quality, research and beach care. Access to the coast will be rationalised, although will include access to the beach at Easington. Once the draft is released comments are welcomed.
- Business Plan – next year's may include improvements to key access points – funding may be available for this.

### **Coastal Forum**

- 18<sup>th</sup> September – Seaham Town Council new offices (function room) has been considered but this is not available for booking yet.
- Consent agreed to invite Coast Watch members.

### **Coastal Tour**

- 'Refresher' tour to be arranged of the whole coast for the steering group – in July 2015.

### **Easington LNR**

- It was noted that Natural England will be preparing a written report which will then go to Cabinet. This issue also relates to access, which is stopping local people getting down to the beach at Easington.

### **Underground Coal Gasification Programme**

- Councillor Boyes asked what sort of impact this programme would have on the Heritage Coast. Niall Benson explained that the Coal Authority is licensing exploratory plots. Our viewpoint will be if proposals impact in terms of landscape quality, nature conservation and access. In the meantime more information will be sought relating to protection for the coastline for off-shore gasification. Niall is not aware of any consent process starting – the "what, when and how" is still unknown and the Partnership needs to keep abreast of any developments. The Partnership will be very active in any proposals.

## **7 HARTLEPOOL LOCAL PLAN – MATTHEW KING AND SARAH BOWMAN, HARTLEPOOL BOROUGH COUNCIL**

The Hartlepool Local Plan is currently out to consultation (23.5.14 – 18.7.14). This plan covers development in Hartlepool to 2031; and will be adopted in 2016.

The vision is to make Hartlepool an attractive town for developers.

The local plan has been divided into 6 main themes :

- Regeneration – where will future development be concentrated (retail and other)
- Housing – where should future housing development be located
- Strengthening the local economy – how can the leisure and tourism industry be developed?
- Developing a sustainable community – can we provide the appropriate range and choice of housing? Can affordable homes be provided for local people? Looking at how to develop safe and accessible open space
- Enhancing the environment – improving the natural, rural and built environment; creating a safe, attractive, accessible and well designed environment; creating development which will minimise climate change
- Improving connectivity – improvements to the road network; developing sustainable transport networks; improving coastal access

The next step is to produce a Draft Plan in January, which will be consulted on again (March-May 2016) with a view to producing the final document in 2016.

## **7 LIMESTONE LANDSCAPES UPDATE – TONY DEVOS**

The Project has so far undertaken a fair amount of work on the coast

- Working on coastal grasslands with the National Trust in which several hectares of gorse clearing with volunteers has taken place.
- A celebratory event has been arranged for volunteers next week.
- Blackhall Rocks carpark – interpretation will be installed soon.
- Geology works have included Fulwell Quarry SSSI which has been relandscaped.
- Historic Environment Works have included the Seaham Lifeboat House (input of £60k) the George Elmy Centre is now thriving, with more than 10,000 visitors in the first year.
- Other projects have included Hawthorn Hive – quarry restoration, restoration of the Heugh Gun Battery and seawall.
- Access Works – Warren House Gill footpath – drainage has now been rectified and much improved.
- Blackhall Road Closure (Deadman's Lane) – this links in with the Heritage Coast's Coast Watch scheme – limiting 4x4's accessing the beach

- Education – 130 schools have taken advantage of the project (learning outside the classroom).
- Field training has taken place with staff and volunteers on various topics such as grasslands, archaeology etc.
- Heritage Skills Training – dry stone walling, coracle work.
- Community Engagement – with childrens' clubs in Castle Eden and Seaham. Also in the Easington area.
- Sports – the Hartlepool Big Lime Marathon is now established.
- Green Exercise – involved with the development of a Park Run
- Involvement with Great North Walks
- Village Atlas works involving the whole of Easington, as well as other areas.

Still to come :

- Geology walks leaflets are being developed for the coast
- Interpretation is being developed on the England Coast Path (Ryhope to Hendon)
- Fencing and water supply at Cross Gill

Future :

Limestone Landscapes Ph 2 – the current grant is coming to an end in December and the Programme will end early next year.

Communities have been asked what they would like to see and £2-3m worth of Projects have been identified. LLP are now looking at the best delivery mechanisms for these projects Durham County Council is undertaking an internal review on the governance, structures and operations of LLP and DHCP.

Councillor Boyes asked when a decision would be made on the future of the two Partnerships. Tony advised that RED Management Team, led by Stuart Timmiss, would be delivering the outcome in the next month or two.

The views of the DHC Partnership were welcomed given the very different funding environment for both groups.

Tony distributed a list of proposed Projects for Years 1 and 2.

In summary, LLP's current main objectives are

- Looking to establish a future delivery body



- Governance options
- Agreeing a host organisation
- Appointment of a Co-ordinator
- Raising funds and thus delivering projects
- Looking at the two Partnerships and the 'crossover' within them

## **8 LOUISE HARRINGTON : HORDEN DENES UPDATE**

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

Warren House to Blackhalls Gill – work commenced on site 5 weeks ago. There will be new footpath links installed as well as new pathways around the site which will link into the coastal footpath.

The new rail halt will be installed in 2016 – works will also include the provision to link into this. The car park at the cliff top will be closed and the flight road will be narrowed. The main aim is to stop illegal 4x4's destroying the SSSI site and to deter flytippers.

Other works on site include installation of 'butterfly wings' on site (similar material to the 'little tern' sculpture on Cotsford Field. The wings will be offset and provide a gateway to the site. Seating on the clifftop will be stone.

Changing Coast website – almost complete. This is a fresh website which uses 'talking heads' (three local youngsters). This looks at various aspects of the site at Horden – habitats; minewater; geology and chemistry and links into the national curriculum. A lot of assistance was given by Northumbrian Water and it will be promoted by OASES to teachers etc as a learning resource.

Fossil Tree – an extinct club moss/cone bearing tree has been donated from Dawdon Community Centre and will be sited at Nose's Point (installation funded by Limestone Landscapes Partnership).

Education – a group of children from Murton school came out to develop their understanding of marine litter, they have requested repeat monthly visits to site.

## **9 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

- Niall will be attending Parliament on Monday regarding coastal communities funding
- Niall asked for permission for Sylvia Tempest (Hartlepool) to become an Ambassador. Sadly Bryan Oram has passed away and George Patterson is poorly. Sylvia is very active and would bring numerous benefits to the Partnership – this was agreed by all.

## **10. DATE OF NEXT MEETINGS**

Annual Forum – Thursday 18 September 2014.  
 Steering Group – Thursday 11 December 2014  
 Steering Group – Thursday 12 March 2015