



**Heritage Coast**  
Sunderland-Durham-Hartlepool

# **DURHAM HERITAGE COAST PARTNERSHIP**

**STEERING GROUP**

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 12 MARCH 2015  
VENUE – RYHOPE CRICKET CLUB**

**[Document consists of 9 pages]**

**I PRESENT**

Joanne Ashworth	Groundwork
Niall Benson	Durham Heritage Coast
Sarah Bowman	Hartlepool Borough Council
Darryl Cox	Durham County Council Countryside
Louise Harrington	Durham Heritage Coast
Paula Hunt	Ryhope Community Association
Joe Lemon	Ryhope Community Association
James MacLean	Northumbrian Water
Myrtle MacPherson	Easington Village Parish Council
Fred Rowe	Steering Group Open Seat Representative
Gary Shears	Durham County Council (Ecology)
Sarah Stevenson	Environment Agency
Nicol Truman	Sunderland City Council
Ruth Tyson	Environment Agency
Mark Usher	Natural England
Ross Wares	Ryhope Community Association
Florence Wilson	Horden Regeneration Partnership
Kelly Youngs	Murton Ribbon School

**2 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

Ross Wares, Chairman, welcomed everyone to the meeting.

**3 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from :

Wayne Appleton	National Trust
Steve Bhowmick	Durham County Council (Design & Conservation)
Councillor D Boyes	Durham County Council (Easington)
Chris Evans	Natural England
Mark Frain	National Trust
Councillor J Maitland	Durham County Council (Murton)
Ed Mason	Ambassador
Councillor S Thomas	Hartlepool Borough Council

**4 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

It was agreed that the minutes of the DHC Steering Group Meeting held on 11th December 2014 were accepted as a true record of proceedings by all present.

## **5 MATTERS ARISING**

### **HALLIWELL BANKS LANDFILL SITE**

Sarah Stevenson (now the Principal contact for Halliwell Banks) gave an update and reassurance that Halliwell Banks was still a priority to the Environment Agency.

The Programme of Works on site scheduled for January/February 2015 has not commenced due to habitat survey work on site which have not been completed; any works may impact on wildlife. City of Sunderland have agreed to act as the Competent Authority in relation to the ecological issues, the Habitat Regulations Assessment is awaiting sign off, Natural England will advise on that. There are now ground nesting birds on site; therefore the next opportunity to commence works on site will be July – September; it was noted that any works will be in collaboration with the landowners. All bird surveys on site will be completed by September. There is a window of opportunity for site works between ground nesting bird and over wintering bird seasons; works should therefore commence on site by September.

Issues around the crops on the land at Halliwell Banks were discussed. Ross Wares was concerned that funding to sort this out may come to an end before the problem was resolved. Sarah Stevenson affirmed that the money was committed; agreements had been signed to carry out the site works.

Ruth Tyson added that in addition to the ongoing coastal erosion monitoring, ecological surveys will have been undertaken on site.

Niall Benson stated that he was concerned about the general deterioration anti-social behaviour on site which is now significant; the serving of Remediation Notices in September would be welcomed in view of the fact that the site is now becoming an embarrassment to the Heritage Coast; Halliwell Banks has been on the Agenda for over 10 years. The site is also suffering from fly tipping, illegal 4x4 access and manhole discharges. There is a community forum where there are continued reports of fly tipping on private land and the Local Authority will not remove it because it is not their responsibility. Niall Benson said the issue would lie with the landowner rather than the farmer. There is also a discharge on site which appears to be continuous sewage, James MacLean (NWL) will investigate this.

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

### **Business Plan Update – Q4**

#### **Projects**

- Coastal Connections – signage will be delivered over the next two months;
- EU Life+ Little Tern Recovery Project – works will start on site in April – this is a National Project and relatively influential.

- Horden Project – Ph 3 is now completed; focus on developing Ph 4 next (Horden station development and implementation).
- Coastal Access – a new Partnership is being established (our Partnership is acting as the secretariat), anyone interested in being part of this sub-group please contact Niall.
- Research Programme (Big Sea Survey 2) – this project is worth around £2m, hopefully it will get approval.
- Events Programme : Low Tide Day at Seaham (17<sup>th</sup> May); Celebrating our Coast at Dalton Park (11<sup>th</sup> July), Ryhope Carnival on 1<sup>st</sup> August.
- Big Lottery Fund – supports community involvement and volunteer rangers over a 5 year period and would make a big difference; no word yet.
- Erasmus Educational Funding Bid – failed to secure funding.
- Durham Coast Grazing Project – completed.
- Limestone Landscapes - Project is ending this month, one officer post is being extended for 1 year. DCC service review underway, Partners will be consulted as the review progresses.

### **Policy**

- Ensure the coast is included in and championed in Local Plans, Community Plans and other processes;
- Continue involvement in coastal water quality issues;
- Support the 3 Rivers Local Nature Partnership;
- Input into national and local government policy changes;
- Support the East Durham Leader initiative;
- Continue to advocate Integrated Coastal Management regionally by working with Defra.

### **Management**

- Publish Management Plan – final version will be distributed by the end of the month; launched formally in April
- Deliver the annual business plan – ongoing
- Valuation of the Heritage Coast
- Deliver the annual coastal forum

### **Communications**

- Coastlines Newsletter – no resource; social media and website revision overtaken as main communication channels;
- Leaflet Portfolio – to be extended as resources allow. Horden leaflets are now available; Ryhope and Grangetown will be produced alongside interpretation
- Website and Social media – continue to develop; website has been refreshed, Twitter and Facebook are active.
- Develop Partner Representative's knowledge and awareness of coastal issues.

### **Logo Revision**

Niall showed samples of the current refreshed logo – all agreed that the new logo will replace the old one.

### **River Basin Management Plan & Water Quality**

River Wear Catchment Partnership and Coastal Streams Partnership (streams flowing into the sea). The coastal streams partnership is now established and is quite informal, £30k Environment Agency funding has been allocated which includes the Castle Eden Dene Catchment Improvement Plan. Castle Eden will be used as a model after which the scheme will be rolled out further. Data is gathered and shared amongst the Partnership.

### **Network Rail**

DHCP are working with Network Rail re. fencing and level crossings. They have funding to make safety improvements.

### **Local Government Association**

Working with the LGA regarding changes to National policy.

### **East Area Interpretation**

Interpretation will be installed on site next month and will make a difference to the place. Results for a funding bid for a project focussing on connecting Sunderland to Seaham are expected w/c 23 March.

### **Beach Schools**

There is a company who specialise in working with Beach schools; working with Back on the Map in Sunderland. There may be a chance of some Partnership working. Nicol Truman will pass on the contact details.

### **Charitable Incorporated Organisation**

A proposed constitution has now been drawn up and circulated. Niall pointed out that this is not a substitute for the Partnership but a charitable branch of it set up due to the pressures on public sector finances and the need to find additional resources by allowing 'trading' and to access funds not normally available.

Ryhope Development Trust have already been through this process, and have become a CIO which has similar benefits of a company limited by guarantee but there is a cap on what Trustees are liable for (can be set at £1 or £10). Three trustees are needed to establish the CIO and anyone is welcome from the

Partnership to be a Trustee. Niall Benson, Principal Heritage Coast Officer is ex-officio in the constitution.

Niall asked the Partnership for formal approval which was granted unanimously.

### **Draft Business Plan**

Highlights :

- Increased delivery commitment;
- Significant project development;
- Coastal streams and water will feature;
- Steering group structure moving to sub-group reporting as recommended;
- Separate LA summaries being prepared.

Housing development impacts highly on nature conservation areas on the coast which need to be protected and enhanced. A plan needs to be in place to provide for this mitigation, hence the new business plan includes a lot more nature conservation elements.

The Heritage Coast Business Plan is more complex than the Management Plan which will have different strategic views but will match the Management Plan by the end of the year.

Horden Denes Ph 1-3 will be deleted when finalised. Phase 4 will include links northwards to Easington Colliery.

Limestone Landscapes Project – there are opportunities to extend the grazing project.

## **7 LEARNING OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM : OUTDOOR FACILITIES, KELLY YOUNGS (MURTON RIBBON SCHOOL)**

Niall has worked with Kelly on the Leader Transnational Project. Kelly works in three schools – Murton Ribbon School, South Hetton and Easington Primary School. 5 years ago a large grant was secured to develop a residential learning programme. Camping was focussed on with the aim of offering all schools, every year, a residential scheme (the younger pupils would just attend for a day) with the primary aim of instilling a love of nature into the children by learning through adventure and appreciating nature and their natural environment. The uptake to the programme was initially low (around 40%) but there is now a 100% uptake.

Benefits are – curriculum, lifeskills, opportunities; literacy; writing for a purpose.

The main obstacle is the lack of local secure outdoor camping facilities. Transport costs are very high to transport children further afield; it would be cheaper and easier to walk somewhere more local especially given what is on 'their doorstep' at Easington in terms of the LNR/Coast etc. Niall encouraged

anyone who could help with this facility in any way to contact Kelly. Gary Shears commented that DCC Ecology are writing a management plan for the site at Easington Colliery and will discuss this further with Kelly.

Kellys' contact details are : Mobile : 07538 906634 or Email : [K.youngs200@durhamlearning.net](mailto:K.youngs200@durhamlearning.net)

## **8 LOUISE HARRINGTON : PROJECT OFFICER'S REPORT**

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

Work on site is now complete. Louise is working with local residents setting up a community group (Horden's Helping Hands, led by Darren Meadows) who want to make a difference to the local area, carrying out community litter picks etc. They have received £1k funding from Natural England.

100m of hedgerow (around 600 trees) have been planted at Horden to secure the boundary and help prevent 4x4 vehicles accessing the site causing damage. The gate on site was damaged yesterday, this will be sorted out.

Joanne Ashworth said that they were arranging a litter pick at Horden and suggested that they could join up with the local group.

The official end date for the project is 31 March 2015.

### **Jimmy Kays Exhibition**

Jean Spence (East Durham Artists Network) has purchased a pack of signed artists' drawings depicting life earlier on this century and life as Durham miner. The artist, Jimmy Kays, was found to be a local Horden lad. Louise circulated copies of a book of the reproduced drawings, all agreed they were fascinating. Louise has arranged for copies of Jimmy's work to be framed and these will be displayed in Horden Heritage Centre/Victorian Tea Rooms when this is opened as a permanent exhibition.

### **HLF Projects**

Two funding bids for projects have made it through to the second round, results should be known by the end of March.

*Reconnecting Community and Coast* – focuses on the defined Heritage Coast from Hendon in north to Seaham in the south and their adjacent communities. The project will focus on bringing together local communities which will allow the development of a true community asset. By re-connecting the local community and their natural heritage we will encourage them to enjoy, learn and take pride in their natural surroundings (£60,000)

*Capturing Coastal Memories* – preserving people's memories of living and growing up on the Durham coastline (£9,200). This Project will also involve local school children who will be engaged through artwork and poetry.

Louise thanked everyone who had submitted letters of support for the projects.

### **Publications**

**WILDLIFE GUIDE** - The set of 7 individual wildlife guides (birds, insects, marine mammals, pebbles, plants, sanddunes and seashore) have now been incorporated into one booklet (Coastal Wildlife Guide), Louise gave samples out.

**COASTAL FOOTPATH BOOKLET** - this is being updated to include the northern and southern section of the new England Coast Path; the new version when reproduced will include sections on Hendon, Ryhope and Hartlepool Headland. The northern sections will include the signage which is being installed as part of the 'Better Basics' Project.

**BLACKHALL WALK LEAFLET** – Blackhall is the only village which is not included in the 'walks about' suite of leaflets (currently Seaham, Dawdon & Dalton-le-Dale, Hawthorn, Easington Colliery, Horden, Castle Eden and Crimdon). Louise will be working with Monk Hesleden Parish Council on design of the leaflet.

### **Website**

The new website was officially launched, good feedback had been received so far on ease of use and appearance.

### **Community Work & Litter Free Coast and Sea**

Louise is working with Valley Road Primary, Hendon next week looking at rockpools and the coastline.

Louise is continuing to support local litter picking groups (ASDA monthly; Seaham Beach Cleaning crew and Dalton-le-Dale Parish Council).

## **II ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

**Coastal Fires** - Florence mentioned the recent spate of fires being lit on the coast spoiling the magnesian grassland. More information is needed by the Police to catch those responsible.

**Easington Colliery Coastal Steps to Beach** – Myrtle MacPherson has been asking for quite some time for these steps to be rectified, the gradient is way too steep and quite dangerous. Niall suggested that Myrtle writes to the National Trust (land owners/managers) and sends some photographs to them as they are responsible for the upkeep of the steps.



**Equine Sector Study** – Niall briefed the meeting of an equine sector study – culminating in a business opportunity with Leader funding.

**Deneholme Barrier** – Negotiations are being with an Angling Club to allowing vehicular access; the anglers will take responsibility for removing unwanted tackle and not leave this on the beach. Joe commented that Ryhope Fishing Club had a policy in place for all anglers to remove their debris; vehicles were not allowed on the cliffs – anyone breaking these rules would be barred from the club. Joe will speak to the Anglers club about their rules and regulations.

**Walk4Life/Public Health Event** – DHC are joining in with an event at Crimdon on Sunday 10 May – a coastal walking event with the Mayor of Hartlepool and the Chair of Durham County Council.

## 10. DATE OF NEXT MEETINGS

Steering Group – Tuesday 30 June 2015 at Blackhall Community Centre.