



Heritage Coast
Sunderland-Durham-Hartlepool

DURHAM HERITAGE COAST PARTNERSHIP

STEERING GROUP

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 11 DECEMBER 2014
VENUE – SEAHAM TOWN COUNCIL, TOWN HALL, SEAHAM**

[Document consists of 8 pages]

I PRESENT

Niall Benson	Durham Heritage Coast
Steve Bhowmick	Durham County Council
Sarah Bowman	Hartlepool Borough Council
Sarah Coulthard	Coastal Matters Consultancy
Gail Craig	Durham Heritage Coast
Mark Frain	National Trust
Colum Goodchild	Northumbrian Water
Oliver Graham	Groundwork
Louise Harrington	Durham Heritage Coast
Cllr J Maitland	Durham County Council (Murton)
Ed Mason	Ambassador
Peter Nailon	Wear Rivers Trust
Fred Rowe	Steering Group Open Seat Representative
Gary Shears	Durham County Council (Ecology)
Sylvia Tempest	Ambassador
Cllr S Thomas	Hartlepool Borough Council
Claire Thompson	3 Rivers Local Nature Partnership
Martin Le Tissier	Coastal Matters Consultancy
Nicol Trueman	Sunderland City Council
Ruth Tyson	Environment Agency
Florence Wilson	Horden Regeneration Partnership
Hester Whyte	Coastal Matters Consultancy

2 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Councillor Mason welcomed everyone to the meeting at the new Seaham Town Council offices.

3 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from :

Councillor D Boyes	Durham County Council (Easington)
Darryl Cox	Durham County Council (Countryside)
Chris Evans	Natural England
Paula Hunt	Ryhope Community Association
Deborah Jefferson	Hartlepool Borough Council
Joe Lemon	Ryhope Community Association
James MacLean	Northumbrian Water
Myrtle MacPherson	Easington Colliery Parish Council
Sarah Stevenson	Environment Agency
Ross Wares	Chair & Ryhope Community Association

4 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

It was agreed that the minutes of the DHC Steering Group Meeting held on 3rd July 2014 were accepted as a true record of proceedings by all present.

5 MATTERS ARISING

EASINGTON LOCAL NATURE RESERVE

Steve Bhowmick informed the meeting that Local Nature Reserve status at Easington has now been approved by Durham County Council's Cabinet. It is now in the process of being established and is progressing.

HALLIWELL BANKS LANDFILL SITE

Niall reported that Sue Goodman had left the Environment Agency, the good work Sue had undertaken in progressing Halliwell Banks was recognised by all. Ruth Tyson or Sarah Stevenson would be attending future meetings representing the Environment Agency. Ruth gave an update of the current situation.

Parties have now signed the voluntary agreement. A programme of works will be starting January/February 2015 which includes groundwater monitoring. EA will be working closely with Natural England on site survey works and coastal erosion will continue to be monitored on site. The erosion rate continues to remain the same as last year (half a metre per year). EA had responded to a recent heavy fall which was outside Area B (household waste area).

Niall asked if any progress had been made with the Baseline Condition Report and what the process for this was. EA will look at different options and this will be progressed more next year.

Councillor Mason expressed concern that excessive weather, when experienced, could prove very detrimental to the site. Ruth confirmed that even if a very heavy fall occurred there would still be space, 6m had been the maximum fall and 7m is the current distance from the cliff edge. EA will continue to monitor.

6 HERITAGE COAST OFFICER'S REPORT – NIALL BENSON

Communications

Niall showed an image of a proposed new logo for the Heritage Coast, which could be adapted and localised as need demands – this will be discussed further at the next steering group meeting and voted on whether to adopt it as a new logo for the Partnership. Discussion ensued on the logo remaining 'Durham' centric – and whether this gives the Partnership more of an identity etc.

Charitable Status/Social Enterprise

This is required to ensure the future of the Partnership due to increasing public sector cuts. Ross Wares and Paula Hunt, Ryhope Community Association are currently undergoing this process so it may be timely to speak to them. The Partnership will have charitable status which would then allow the Partnership to 'trade' and to also access funding streams which we cannot currently access.

A formal proposal will be prepared and given to all Partners. The charity would be a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) – Foundation model which would include named trustees – it is hoped to have this in place and running by April. The Partnership would be in the Charity Commission's control – the Partnership would form the body of it, reporting procedures would be a lot less onerous.

Steve Bhowmick said that future resources would not be available, this would provide a smarter way of working which needs to be supported by Partners. There are some areas which need to be sorted relating to Trustees and liability.

Niall asked if anyone had any comments to get in touch. This will be discussed further at March's meeting once everyone has had a chance to see the formal proposal.

England Coast Path Partnership

The England Coast path is a national trail, taking in most of our existing coastal footpath as part of it and joining up with Hartlepool to the South and Sunderland to the North. There is a Partnership being formed – if anyone would like to be part of this Partnership, please get in touch with Niall. Health and associated benefits will form part of the remit of this Partnership.

'Better than Basics'/Sunderland East Area Coastal Interpretation

Samples were shown, design will be by Differentia Ltd. Designs were currently out for review. The signs will be manufactured locally in Hendon and will be sited at key points along the England Coast Path. East Area Committee are contributing £50k and the Limestone Landscapes Partnership are contributing £10k.

Q3 Update – Business Plan

Highlights :

- Beachcare
- Coast Watch
- Events (inc Ryhope Carnival)
- Water Quality
- Horden completion – Phase 4 of this project includes the Rail Station and the opportunities associated with this.

Discussion ensued about funding streams, in particular the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF). Once the Horden Project is finalised, another Project will be submitted for consideration

7 WELL BEING RESEARCH PRESENTATION, SARAH COULTHARD – COASTAL MATTERS CONSULTANCY

Niall introduced Sarah who has been working with Coastal Matters Consultancy assessing how we value our coastline and the relevance of this to the work DHC do with local communities.

Key areas :

- Measuring wellbeing/measuring quality of life - how can this be measured? People's wellbeing is a more meaningful measure of social progress and this can mean different things to different people. Can this change Policy? Possibilities included a shorter working week leading to greater productivity and ultimately boosting the economy; better health for workers and stronger family relationships being formed (less dependence on childcare) – there is strong evidence to support this.
- Relevance to coastal management – fisheries; tourism; industry; Public Use and Access; Transport; Recreation; Nature Conservation are all relevant to coastal management. What would coastal management be like with people's wellbeing as it's central focus?
- Practical example from elsewhere (Northern Ireland fisheries) – psychological, social and material needs were all researched and the impacts of these. What matters to people of the Durham Heritage Coast and why? It is important to understand how people relate to others, very relevant for current goals and practice.

Ed Mason commented that this was a very worthwhile approach and said that communities had declined since the closure of the pits on the Durham coast and there will be minimum levels people can operate at to be happy and there were barriers to overcome. Fred Rowe said the impact of closure of the mines had been so devastating for communities because they had not been taught how to be independent.

Oliver Graham said that when organisations apply for external funding questions were always raised about extra added value; this academic research could complement this and help in future funding applications.

Peter Nailon said that the environment is a good indicator of wellbeing e.g. in flytipping areas, that involvement of people cleaning the area can make them feel that they can make a difference (“collective-v-individual”). County Durham has a beautiful environment, people do not respect it enough.

Councillor Thomas compared our coastline with Scandanavia where it is felt socio-economic levels equalled greater wellbeing. He added that when health issues come under scrutiny, wellbeing is sometimes overlooked and these links must be made. Oliver Graham commented that there is a strong link between mental health and wellbeing.

Claire Thompson said that economics impact on communities; wellbeing can be connected with where you live. Reconciliation between the majority and minority was discussed, and who should be supported? Councillor Maitland said that community environmental engagement activities should be encouraged as well as visiting schools and educating the young.

A questionnaire was handed out covering what matters; what is frustrating; how can people benefit etc.

8 3 RIVERS LOCAL NATURE PARTNERSHIP PRESENTATION, CLAIRE THOMPSON

This Partnership was formed through the National Environment White Paper 2011, 3 Rivers gaining approval in July 2012. Partners include local authorities, Environment Agency, Natural England, local industry, Forestry Commission, HLF, Durham Wildlife Trust, the National Trust and Groundwork. The vision is 'Our Natural Environment providing a Healthier and Wealthier North East'. Key aims include :

- To protect and improve the natural environment
- Growing a green economy/green environment = more grassed areas = less crime
- Connecting people with nature – bringing the environment closer to people
- Leadership (high level of commitment from Board members).

Current Projects

- Promotion and Communications
- Health and wellbeing
- Educational website (HLF)
- Bline strategy
- Improving access through linking walks
- Woodland and GIS mirroring
- Land of Oak and Iron
- Bright Water
- Lidar – identify projects for Gateshead, South Tyneside and Sunderland
- Planning
- Metro Green
- Countryside Stewardship

9 RIVER WEAR CATCHMENT PARTNERSHIP PRESENTATION, PETER NAILON, CHAIR OF PARTNERSHIP

Peter handed out a Governance and Structure document for the Partnership. Partners included North Pennines AONB, Durham Wildlife Trust, Environment Agency, Sunderland City Council, Groundwork, Durham University, Durham

Heritage Coast Partnership, Natural England, Durham County Council, Limestone Landscapes Partnership and Northumbrian Water.

The Partnership structure has devolved Local Delivery and Task and Finish Groups.

Functions of the Partnership include :

- Balancing multiple interests and pressures on the river
- Improving places where people and wildlife live
- Restored environment
- Social cohesion
- Health and wellbeing
- Economic Regeneration

Emphasis on community and volunteer involvement being one of the key factors of success.

10 LOUISE HARRINGTON : HORDEN DENES UPDATE

HLF Horden Denes Project (Phase 3)

Work on site is now almost complete. A joint visit to site with the National Trust and DCC Countryside will take place in the New Year.

A celebratory walk took place to the site in September involving around 35 people ending with a presentation at Horden Welfare Hall. The event was also attended by a representative from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) who were pleased with the results. The scheme has been very well received with local residents.

Louise has also been working with Horden Comrades Club who were keen to showcase local heritage, some large prints have been produced and have been well received.

A video for the project has been produced – it is on the DHC Facebook page, reaching more than 3500 people! Louise showed some images from the site – flooding under the bridge has now been repaired by Network Rail. The access gate has been vandalised and has now been taken away for repair (the gate was installed to stop flytipping). The steel butterfly sculpture is now in place and the seat near the clifftop is now in situ, reports from local residents is that it is a quiet place for reflection and peace and is being referred to as the 'Horden Wheel'. Florence Wilson added that residents were very proud of it.

Louise also showed a blueprint for a new website which has been refreshed and updated, and will feature the new logo if adopted. The website should be ready to be launched early next year - it is easier to read, bright and modern. Interactive Google mapping and a Facebook feed will also appear on the site.

Beach Cleans – The Seaham Asda Group are continuing to go out for around one hour every month. The group consists of around 10 people, each collecting around two bags of rubbish. They are going to continue their commitment throughout 2015.

Seaham Beach Clean Crew, led by Nicola Beldham, tend to go out on weekends. Last weekend saw 18 people joining in, around 50 bags of rubbish and some trolleys were collected.

11 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Fred Rowe queried underground coal gasification and what impact this would have on the coastline. Niall informed the meeting that Statutory bodies are all involved in the process (and would receive notification of any applications being made) – including Natural England, the Marine Management Organisation and Local Authorities – these organisations would all need to be satisfied before any schemes go ahead.

At Horden - there may be evidence that the aquifer would be affected, so undersea options would be explored. There may be a trial offshore at Horden (to prove it works and satisfies conditions). Offshore work offers less environmental impact. However nothing has been received thus far.

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETINGS

Steering Group – Thursday 12 March 2015