



**Heritage Coast**  
Sunderland-Durham-Hartlepool

# **HERITAGE COAST PARTNERSHIP**

## **STEERING GROUP**

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 27 MARCH 2018  
VENUE – SUNDERLAND CITY COUNCIL (CTEE ROOM 1)**

**[Document consists of 15 pages]**

**I PRESENT**

Niall Benson – Heritage Coast Partnership  
Steve Bhowmick – Durham County Council (Design and Conservation)  
Ernie Cooper – East Durham Heritage Group  
Darryl Cox – Durham County Council (Countryside Service)  
Gail Craig – Heritage Coast Partnership (Minutes)  
Ian Graham – Sunderland City Council  
Joanne Grantham – Environment Agency  
Louise Harrington – Heritage Coast Partnership  
Councillor P Hunt – Ryhope Community Association  
Joe Lemon – Ryhope Community Association  
Ed Mason – Heritage Coast Ambassador  
Gary Shears – Durham County Council (Ecology)  
Victoria Smith – PhD Student, Durham University  
Lloyd Tyson – Environment Agency  
Andrew Turner – Environment Agency  
Belinda Williams – Dementia Friends (Alzheimers Society)

**2 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS – Councillor Hunt****3 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Councillor R Arthur – Seaham Town Council  
Andrew Bewick – Sunderland City Council  
Katharine Birdsall – Environment Agency  
Councillor G Crute - Blackhalls  
Claire Dewson – Sunderland City Council  
Beverley Jones – Horden Regeneration Partnership  
James MacLean – Northumbrian Water Limited  
Zoe McKay – Marine Management Organisation  
Councillor J Maitland – Durham County Council (Murton)  
Chris Scaife – Hartlepool Borough Council  
Nicol Trueman – Sunderland City Council

**4 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

It was agreed that the minutes of the Heritage Coast Steering Group Meeting held at Seaton Holme, Easington Village in Dec 2017 were accepted as a true record of proceedings by all present.

**5 MATTERS ARISING****HALLIWELL BANKS LANDFILL SITE**

Ernie Cooper queried whether the section of the England Coast Path at Ryhope went past Halliwell Banks; this was confirmed by Joe Lemon.

Andrew Turner, Environment Agency, passed out a Briefing Note (attached) showing an overview of the site, and emphasising that this site remains a priority.

Part 2A regime – this can take a long time to process as it can involve complex legislation. The site remains a priority, monitoring has continued and will continue, erosion is monitored on site monthly and quarterly surveys are taking place.

There are now higher staffing levels which will mean dedicated resources are available to put some concerted effort into this site. It is important that the appropriate persons identified will be reminded of their responsibilities – correspondence will soon be issued to them.

It was noted that there have been different staff from the Environment Agency attending the Steering Group over the last 12-18 months which has now been rectified, Lloyd Tyson is now the main point of contact for this Partnership, supported by Joanne Grantham and there will be a commitment from them to attend future meetings or to provide a written update.

Joe Lemon asked whether samples of sea water are being tested and said that the site is very complicated; and commented that the weather is a large factor on erosion rates. Even up to 2 year ago the area used to be a good fishing spot with ample marine life – this has now disappeared and this is very worrying. Joe Lemon also advised that he knew what is actually in the quarry. Andrew Turner said the EA were aware of the areas of concern and where remediation will take place. Samples have been taken in the past, although he had no results to hand today. Sea water sampling can be done if the EA deem it is necessary along with the monthly monitoring currently taking place.

Joe explained that changes to the tide and big storms can cause huge cliff drops which is dangerous if the beach is in use. Andrew said the EA were aware of the timescales and the risks. Joe Lemon said that the timescales would realistically be shorter than EA predictions, possibly around 18 months shorter with local knowledge of the cliffs, tides, recent odours on site and previous landfalls all taken into account.

Andrew Turner said that landfill legislation has evolved a lot and this would not happen now. He said it was important that remediation takes place effectively – public health and safety and beach safety are paramount.

Lloyd Tyson added that further correspondence with the appropriate persons would be initiated to process remediation. Progress is now very much on the radar but work has not stopped. The EA are still monitoring and are currently preparing and finalising a letter to the appropriate persons about the post determination report and will be pushing the appropriate persons for remediation measures.

Joe said that the current snowstorms have been devastating for the coast. He said that Halliwell Banks was made up of sand, limestone and topsoil– if there

are more large tides hitting the cliff, up to 12m could fall off in one tide. Unfortunately if this breaches and the contents start to emerge all the beaches along the Durham coastline will be affected. He urged the EA to keep moving this forward as this has been on the Agenda for more than 15 years.

Lloyd said that EA will be progressing this issue, reiterating that it is a time consuming and complex process.

Ed Mason expressed dissatisfaction that the briefing note supplied did not give any real information and that more detailed information had not been supplied. He said that erosion was progressing at 5m per year, and that 12m was remaining. He asked how often this was measured. He said that there should be a monitoring plan available for the Partnership to view so we could understand the reasoning behind EA's actions. Seaham has now become a thriving place to visit and this could really affect it.

He asked for more information to be made available and stressed that more collaboration is needed. Lloyd said that once EA had finalised the response on the report and the appropriate persons had been contacted and had given agreement to share the report; then it could then be shared. He said that monitoring is carried out quarterly, and that the EA carry out monthly visual cliff inspections.

Ed Mason said that the EA needed to speak to more local people about the site and queried whether monitoring was happening quarterly. Lloyd said that on reports of cliff collapses from Niall, Ian and Joe they had acted on this – EA had visited the site and acted appropriately.

Andrew Turner added that there is an incident hotline number which is available 24/7 when all incidents reported are officially logged.

Correspondence will be made to the appropriate persons and EA will share the Natural England joint report with this Partnership once the AP's had given agreement.

Ernie Cooper asked what voluntary remediation the EA wanted to see happening on site. Andrew Turner said remediation works need to be managed without risk to public health and any steps taken need to be reasonable. Hard engineering solutions can be very costly, remediation works need to be subject to cost benefit analysis. Discussion ensued about the appropriate persons who are responsible for the contamination of the site – there are at least 5 polluters who have liabilities apportioned to them. Each party holds a percentage of the liability; although it was again highlighted that there needs to be a balance between economies and public safety.

Ian Graham queried the likelihood of contaminants entering the foodchain. Lloyd Tyson said that the overall risk would have to be looked into; as far as he is aware no risk has been documented to human health. Ian Graham asked if crops should be tested as cyanide had been found. Councillor Hunt confirmed that this had been removed. Ian Graham also highlighted that plastics on site

dating back to 1965 were now on the surface and it was worrying to think what else could be inside the quarry.

Andrew Turner said that he understood the main area containing cyanide had been removed. If there was any risk to public health EA would look to Public Health England to provide expertise; the EA believed the risk to be quite low, although advice would have to be sought on this.

Ian Graham also commented on the lack of marine life, having surveyed the area. Andrew Turner said that this would also have to be looked at.

Niall Benson reiterated the length of time this issue had been on the agenda and hoped EA understood the sensitivity around the site. In terms of the draft report which the Partnership had been promised site of, Lloyd Tyson said that once comments had been received from the appropriate persons, the report would be finalised.

Niall Benson commented that it would be extremely useful to have any data pertaining to the site. A post-determination report has been mentioned today which the Partnership had no knowledge of and which may be useful.

Andrew Turner said the EA were willing to commit to attending future meetings and to share data as it gains momentum.

Councillor Hunt asked when the findings of the investigation were likely to be complete and asked if the draft report was in the public domain, given the Partnership were promised sight of this report over a year ago. Councillor Hunt expressed dissatisfaction that the original borehole testing (10m) had not been deep enough and this issue was raised at the time with EA.

She also enquired whether regular water samples in Area B were still being taken from the cliffs (leakage) and at what intervals this was occurring.

She added that the timespan for this issue was totally unacceptable, although she did appreciate that lack of resources can impact on projects. She expressed disappointment to hear that a letter to the appropriate persons still had not been sent and that the Partnership were promised the outcomes of the report 18 months ago

Councillor Hunt also expressed concern that the Partnership still did not know what was in the quarry, despite assurances that a report would be forthcoming. She enquired what the legal process would be to access this report and to have it in the public domain. She added that this issue has been on the Agenda of this Partnership for 15 years – in this time kelp beds which were flourishing after the closure of the mines and the results of decades of coal spoil being deposited directly into the sea have now disappeared. Rockpools which were surveyed and sealife was returning were now barren. This demise of sealife has occurred over the last 2-3 years – there has to be a reason – further water sampling must take place on site to determine the reasons why.

Andrew Turner said he would have to check and if the report can be shared it will be. He will also look into the water testing in areas other than Area B and will look holistically at what sampling is being done on site. Ian Graham said that water quality samples were available on the internet and the last time water was sampled in this area was in 2012.

Ed Mason said monitoring was only effective if it was continual, if water sampling has stopped EA can look into this and find out the reasons why. In view of the large cliff collapses, he felt that monitoring was imperative and must be done regularly and correctly.

Andrew Turner said that monitoring is carried out monthly and quarterly, water sampling could also be included and the results could be shared with the Partnership.

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

Copies of the Business Plan (Quarter 4) were distributed, Niall advised the meeting that all of our activities feed into the Executive Summary of the Plan. The Seascape Project (£5m) has now been approved and a Development Manager has been appointed and commences work on 16th April. Currently advertising for a Communications and Engagement Officer, interviews will be held in April.

This Project initially runs for 18 months – if we receive second round approval, it would run for a further 4 years from 2020.

Reconnecting Communities and Coast – Louise has now closed this project off. Louise will continue working with the Partnership until the end of September.

EU Life+ Little Tern Project – with regard to the site at Crimdon, the boardwalk has been removed and fencing is being installed to control the flow of people accessing the beach. The colony fence will be installed mid-April. The tender for the Wardens is currently out. Newcastle University are currently carrying out surveys about food supply and disturbance levels.

Hartlepool Borough Council are now receiving HRA funding for marine development now that mitigation money is coming in. Sunderland City Council are using their HRA funding on Ian Graham's coastal ranger post. It is hoped by the end of the current financial year Durham will also have something similar in place. It was noted that Hartlepool Borough Council do not intend using any HRA funding on employing a ranger.

Beachcare – Louise Harrington is leading on this and is accommodating requests from numerous corporate groups as well as Greenpeace who have expressed an interest in Crimdon. Louise is also assisting with any school groups who want to come out; and assisting Ian with Sunderland school groups. Recent T.V. coverage (David Attenborough's Blue Planet) has helped highlight the issue of marine litter. The Seascape project will also help with this.

The 2017 Events programme had been delivered. Ryhope Carnival will not take place this year due to lack of funding. Reach for the Beach 2018 will be going ahead albeit the number of activities will be slightly reduced; the festival will take place over 7 days this year.

NE Waterhub – this ERDF bid was successful and this has now been set up in Durham University with Northumbrian Water and the Environment Agency. They will be invited to the next steering group meeting to present.

Coastal Communities Fund – Crimdon Facilities – open now for funding applications and Expressions of Interest are invited by the end of April. We will be applying for facilities at Crimdon, similar to Tonia's (toilets and café). A bid will be submitted; this will join up with activities at Crimdon and may allow for volunteer space, on-site Warden etc.

England Coast Path National Trail Partnership – the Heritage Coast team act as the secretariat for this Partnership which includes the local authorities from South Tyneside, Sunderland, Hartlepool and Stockton. Funding has been received for access. There will be a launch event in June at Souter Lighthouse, invitations will be sent out. It would be a good idea to have a presentation on this too.

Coastal Streams Partnership – we are also the secretariat for this Partnership, Victoria Smith will be giving a presentation later on the work she has done around this for her PhD studies.

Denemouth Development – this has not started yet due to multiple land ownership and conflicts with access.

Access – HRA payments are assisting with the acceleration of this process, particularly at Easington Colliery Nature Reserve which acts as a 'buffer' for dog walkers. There is a circular path being installed along with other improvements to the site – this site will be used as a case study.

Hightide Roost Project – a survey on over wintering birds will finish at the end of this month. Ian Graham will cover this later in his presentation.

Coastal Grazing – this is going ahead. National Trust are extending this to Cotsford Field and there was some discussion about extending this northwards to Nose's Point. Currently there are issues with motorbikes.

East Durham Creates – still supporting this initiative although currently staffing levels are low.

Water Signage – continued involvement with this.

Coastal Zone Management – the Seascape Project will assist with this.

## **7 CATCHMENT PARTNERSHIP GOVERNANCE RESEARCH – VICTORIA SMITH, DURHAM UNIVERSITY**

Victoria is a PhD student at Durham University (Geography Department).

Victoria has been researching collaborative water resource management using a catchment based approach with the Wear Catchment Partnership, looking at topsoil outputs.

Work has included identifying barriers and strengths of community results, including strategic and local management and informing stakeholders of the approaches.

Water Framework Directive – there is a need for collaboration; identifying who the stakeholders are, what roles they play, what do they contribute and how decisions are made.

Understanding (theory and methods) – using data collection by surveys and interviews and examining the findings.

Findings – these were shown using a complex diagram depicting public/private/voluntary sector organisations involved in various projects and shows how the different organisations link together.

Victoria requested that everyone completed the survey (link to be emailed).

## **8 COAST – IAN GRAHAM, CITY OF SUNDERLAND COASTAL RANGER**

Ian Graham gave a presentation about the COAST project which includes ecologists, Natural England, Durham Wildlife Trust, Northumbrian Water, Heritage Coast Partnership, RSPB, landowners and Ryhope Community Association.

The project uses S106 funding which had come from the development of 3334 new dwellings which had been built within 6km of the SPA and SAC in Sunderland. Developers now have to mitigate potential damage to ecology and habitats through increased footfall from housing development sites.

Ian has carried out a lot of work with the Heritage Coast Partnership at various events and activities and works with the Marine Conservation Society with beachcleans. He is busy drawing up a busy programme of events for over the summer months.

Part of Ian's role is to expedite surveys including birds, reptiles, habitats, butterflies, seaweed, lugworm. He is also endeavouring to get Hendon designated as a local wildlife site. Ian has also carried out visitor surveys on the coast from Hendon to Seaham, surveys took place mainly on the beach or the promenade, and some on the England Coast Path.

Results have shown dog walking ranks the highest in terms of reasons to visit the coast, followed by recreational walkers and beach combers (usually looking



for sea glass). Most visitors are local from the local community and travel less than 6km, attracted by the convenience of the coast to their homes and convenient parking.

Dog walking – a high proportion of dog walkers let their dogs off lead which will definitely have an impact on wintering birds.

Surveying the public is interesting, the public do not realise the beach is protected by law, interpretation stating this might be a good idea.

ERIC had also provided help on carrying out surveys using an App on iPad/iPhone whereby all records are sent to ERIC electronically.

Habitat management is also a feature of Ian's role, lately he has been planting rockrose to encourage butterfly habitats.

Fly tipping is also a big problem, the England Coast Path runs through Durham to Sunderland, sometimes tipping occurs right on the footpath. Sunderland City Council clean this up; a barrier has been installed lately which has helped by preventing access.

## **9 BELINDA WILLIAMS, ALZHEIMERS SOCIETY – DEMENTIA FRIENDLY COAST**

Belinda is the Dementia Friendly Community Co-ordinator for East Durham, her role is supported by the Alzheimer's Society and assists with facilitating people living with dementia, working to make their communities work together. They also run awareness sessions to help people better understand dementia.

Each environment and place is different and the coast could be identified as a community for people who live and work there as well as those who come and visit.

Belinda has been looking at Crimdon café plans and interpretation - looking at ways to make this dementia friendly which includes involving people in their research.

The aim of the project is to develop dementia friendly communities. People living with dementia and their families should be included in their communities more to minimise isolation. It is important to raise awareness and break the stigma by being more inclusive. This can be achieved by engaging with volunteers and people living in communities and local businesses along the coast, looking at ways of working together and by making realistic changes.

Small working groups can be formed with enthusiastic and motivated volunteers; developing key action areas and consulting with people within the community to get their feedback and determine where change is needed.

An action plan is being developed; communities are starting to emerge and groups are beginning to be formed, enabling people to open up dialogue and break down the stigma attached to dementia.

The coast is an exciting area to develop as it links into everyone's lives igniting memories from the past; the goal would be to make the Durham coastline accessible for everyone to visit.

The board agree that the Heritage Coast should work towards becoming a dementia friendly coast.

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## **10 BUSINESS PLAN – NIALL BENSON**

Niall will circulate the link to the management plan as well as publishing some hard copies. Niall suggested the Management Plan is now adopted. Once this occurs the current format will become obsolete; there is some further work to do to refine the business plan.

Niall explained that the Executive Summary guides the work of the Partnership. Niall asked that the Partnership reads the plan then hopefully this can be adopted at the June meeting.

## **11 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

No.

## **12 CONTACT LIST**

Pages 13-15 show contact details for all members of the Heritage Coast Partnership.

## **10 DATE OF NEXT MEETINGS**

**Wed 18<sup>th</sup> July 2018**  
**Thurs 27 September 2018 (Annual Forum)**  
**Thursday 13 December 2018**

Page No	Name	Action
3	Environment Agency	Finalising letter to appropriate persons re Halliwell Banks
6	Gail Craig	Send out Business Plan Q4 with minutes when distributed
7	Niall Benson	Arrange NE Waterhub presentation at the next meeting Arrange England Coast Path Partnership presentation at the next meeting
7	Niall Benson	Arrange invitations to Souter Lighthouse launch event.
8	Gail Craig	Send out survey link for Catchment Partnership Governance Research for Victoria Smith, PhD student
10	Niall Benson	Circulate the Management Plan

## **Briefing Note for Halliwell Banks** **Update March 2018**



- The site falls within the scope of the **Part 2A contaminated land regime**.
- The site was determined as **Contaminated Land** by Sunderland City Council on 5 November 2008 and designated a **Special Site** because of the risk that specific contaminants pose to the groundwater in the Magnesian Limestone Principal Aquifer, the North Sea and the Special Protection Area (SPA).
- We are the enforcing authority for the site and we have a duty to require its remediation.
- The Part 2A regime promotes voluntary remediation in the first instance. If this does not happen then we must serve a Remediation Notice requiring remediation.
- We have identified the parties we consider are responsible for the contamination (known as **Appropriate Persons (APs)**). We have been working with the APs for some time to secure voluntary remediation. Despite several false starts this was not forthcoming so we prepared a draft Remediation Notice and consulted them on this. After the consultation we advised them that we intended to serve this if they did not agree to voluntary action.
- In October 2013 all APs agreed to carry out voluntary remediation works. This was followed by a period of time within which the design and scope of the ground investigation was finalised and agreed upon by the APs and Environment Agency. Site works were subsequently undertaken between September and October 2015.
- We were expecting the report on the outcome of the site investigation to be provided by the APs in mid-April 2016. However, there were delays and we were informed that we could expect the report in September 2016.
- After further discussions we received the draft report in August 2016 and arranged a subsequent meeting with the APs and Sunderland City Council in September 2016, which included a site visit to Halliwell Banks.
- Following the provision of the draft report and meeting, we requested additional information from the APs to support the controlled waters risk assessments. A meeting between the Environment Agency and Natural England was held in December 2016 to discuss the findings of the report.
- Following this meeting we have assessed the findings of the report and are preparing a response to the APs. This will include the Environment Agency and Natural England's assessment of the report findings with regard to the statutory remits of each organisation, the understanding of the site, the situation to date and the proposed next steps to be undertaken by the APs in the remediation process.
- The Part 2A regime requires remedial options and liability to be fully explored before appropriate action can be implemented and promotes voluntary remediation wherever possible. It is consequently a lengthy, time-consuming and complex process. The progress of the project has previously slowed due to shifting area priorities and significant staffing changes which have now been addressed.
- The Environment Agency continue to monitor the coastal erosion by undertaking visual walkover inspections at the site on a monthly basis and carry out surveys of the cliff face on a quarterly basis. This is an actively eroding coastline and based on the above coastal erosion surveys, it is estimated that the erosion rate for the cliff is 0.5 metres/year. There is approximately 12 metres of cliff remaining before the landfill is breached at the closest point within Landfill B, the area of greatest concern.

customer service line  
03708 506 506

incident hotline  
0800 80 70 60

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03459 88 11 88

**HERITAGE COAST STEERING GROUP CONTACT LIST**

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Seaham Town Council	Eddie Mason AMBASSADOR and Vice Chair  Cllr R Arthur  Paul Fletcher Seaham Town Council Parks Department Cemetery Lodge Princess Road Seaham Co Durham SR7 7TD Tel 07718 984210	<a href="mailto:parks@seaham.gov.uk">parks@seaham.gov.uk</a>

Ryhope Community Association C/o Ryhope Community Centre Black road Ryhope Sunderland SR2 0RX	Councillor Paula Hunt (CHAIR) 5239371  Joe Lemon	
Myrtle MacPherson	OPEN SEAT REP 1	<b>NOT ON EMAIL</b>
Fred Rowe	OPEN SEAT REP 2	
Ernie Cooper East Durham Heritage Group	OPEN SEAT REP 3	
Cllr Gaynor Crute Chair of Monk Hesleden Parish Council 132 West Avenue Blackhall Colliery Hartlepool TS27 4LD	Blackhalls	
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