

# Parks and Countryside



# Progression Highlights

- 20 Local Wildlife Sites under positive management, ongoing delivery of Countryside Stewardship Schemes, successful assessment of SSSIs through Natural England.
- 5000 school pupils on facilitated visits, 4000 public event attendees, 600 harder to reach individuals engaged in targeted programmes.
- Programming further shaped to EEAP and CERP 3 priorities. Delivery of 100 school visits to promote EEAP consultation and nature recovery.
- 66 new volunteers recruited, over 9,400 volunteer hours delivered this financial year so far, equating to an in-kind Service contribution of over £105,900.
- Upwards of 100k of external funding secured through increased capacity for bid applications and delivery management.
- Partnership working thriving - key projects inc. Coastal Grasslands SSF and Durham City Green Corridor.
- Capital schemes under development including new play area at Hardwick Park, opening of changing places facility, extensive RP improvements.





# Project Examples



Ferryhill Carrs  
2019 vs 2022  
➤ New investment for further works 2024/5



Low Newton Junction:  
➤ Further works 2025 onwards...



Tees Valley Railway  
➤ New investment potential for further access improvements 2025/26



Hardwick Park:  
➤ New investment for waymarking and signage 2024/25

# Ongoing Management Practices





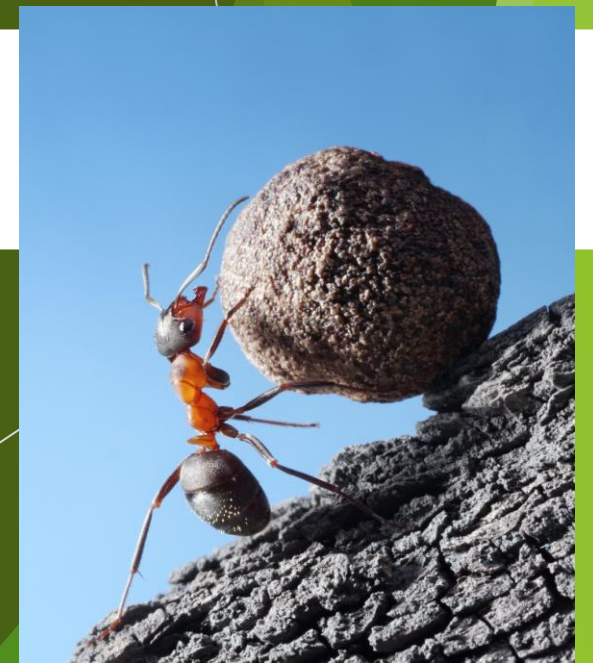
# Opportunities

- External Funding:
  - Species Survival Fund
  - Other - made possible from additional staff resource until 2026
  - Durham Corridor
- BNG (Habitat improvements)
- Natural History GCSE
- CERP3, progress of EEAP and LNRS
- Review of volunteering programmes



# Challenges

- MTFP 15 2025/26 proposals:
  - Potential loss of staff
  - Revenue pressures



# Any Questions?



# Clean and Green Durham County Council

- ▶ Brief overview of updates:
  - ▶ Policy and strategy
    - ▶ Future of managed maintenance reduction informed by DU Study
    - ▶ BNG/LNRS input from team, and pausing biodiversity interventions in until these policies/mechanisms are in place
    - ▶ Duty to Consult on street trees (new legislation and process)
    - ▶ Update on Glyphosate usage
  - ▶ Projects and Systems
    - ▶ Feedback on Bessemer park project (presentation given at Hardwick visit 2024)
    - ▶ APSE LAMS inspection regime update

# Policy and Strategy

- ▶ The biodiversity strategy for DCC land is still in development, and largely dependant on LNRS and BNG policies.
- ▶ Environment and Design and Clean and Green colleagues are feeding into these, and have paused new interventions until they are finalised.
- ▶ BNG is unlikely to be an income generator for DCC, but will provide funding to enable some of DCC's 'green aspirations'
- ▶ The learning from the study will be incorporated into the strategy to ensure resident buy in (as much as possible).



# Policy and Strategy

- ▶ New legislation came in in late 2023 that required any trees on highway verges with a trunk diameter of 8cm or more to have consultation undertaken before removal.
  - ▶ Guidance from DEFRA, despite being promised, did not arrive, and so DCC has learned from other authorities and NGOs and developed its own system, that is similar in nature to a planning application.
- ▶ A reduction in glyphosate use has been proposed as part of MTFP 15. We previously reported success in a herbicide reduction around obstacles on green spaces around the county: it has been suggested that this approach be widened to the whole county bringing both a financial and biodiversity benefit.



# Projects and Systems

## *Bessemer Park*

- ▶ Bessemer Park Grass/flower meadow
  - ▶ The project was presented at the Hardwick Park site visit in 2024. Since then, the ground was prepared and a native flower/low growing grass seed mix was applied.
  - ▶ The meadow was a huge success when flowering, with people travelling from around the county and beyond to visit the site. It was widely shared on social media (not from original DCC channels)
  - ▶ A Local authority in Scotland got in touch to ask advice on their wildflower meadows.
  - ▶ Well received by residents when flowering
  - ▶ However - there was some learning in consultation. The sowing of the wildflower seed happened late due to weather and project delays (contaminated land surveys)
  - ▶ As such the time between initial consultation and ground prep was around 15 months.
  - ▶ A good deal of customer queries were received about the land, with residents unhappy that the green space provision was being disrupted.
  - ▶ Future projects should ensure 'reminders' across communication outputs to ensure residents are kept up to date.

# Projects and Systems

## *Bessemer Park*





# Projects and Systems

## *Bessemer Park*



# Projects and Systems

## *APSE LAMS inspections*

- ▶ Brief overview of how we inspect open spaces
  - ▶ Over 300 sites inspected bi monthly - range of designation, commercial, residential, Open space, industrial etc.
  - ▶ Dog foul graded - clear, small presence, significant, severe
  - ▶ Litter - clear, small presence, significant, severe
  - ▶ Results are inputted on site and provide only a snap shot of any given site.
  - ▶ APSE collate the data and send out reports each quarter, showing our data against other similar authorities (anonymised).