



**County Durham Environment Partnership Board  
Minutes**

**Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2014  
Gala Theatre, Durham**

**Apologies**

Jim Cokill - Durham Wildlife Trust  
 Alan Hunter - English Heritage  
 John Reed - Durham County Council  
 Gordon Elliott - Durham County Council  
 Julie Bradbrook - Durham County Council  
 Stuart Timmiss - Durham County Council

**Attendees:**

**Chair:** Terry Collins - Durham County Council

Julie Form - Groundwork North East  
 Julian Carrington - Environment Agency  
 Steve Hunter - Climate Change Group  
 Adrian Vass - Natural England  
 Oliver Sherratt - Durham County Council  
 Steve Bhowmick - Durham County Council  
 Vicki Burrell - Durham County Council  
 Debra Kitching - Durham County Council  
 Beverley Clark (Minutes) - Durham County Council

<b>Item No.</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Action By</b>
<b>1.</b>	<b>Welcome and Introductions</b> The chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and apologies noted.	
<b>2.</b>	<b>Minutes and Matters Arising</b> The group was informed that Durham City has been nominated for Britain in Bloom with sponsorship from the Durham City Bid. It was stated that the first report of the Council Budget Consultation 2014-2017 had gone through Cabinet. Adrian reported that he was impressed with the Health Mapping Tool which was presented at the last meeting. He asked for permission to pass the Health Mapping Tool to the Northumberland LNP and permission was given.	
<b>3.</b>	<b>Presentations from Group Chairs &amp; Questions</b> <u>Coastal, Heritage &amp; Landscape Group</u> Oliver reported on the progress of the new group and pointed out examples of good work already in existence:- Heart of Teesdale, Limestone landscapes, Durham	

Hedgerow Partnership, Heritage Coast, Derwent Valley (Land of Oak and Iron), Visit County Durham, North of England Civic Trust and Local Nature Partnership. The group has held two meetings, is well attended and has wide representation. Five key partnership project areas have been agreed with a possible 6<sup>th</sup> in the pipeline. A SWOT Assessment was undertaken at the first meeting which showed a lot of individual strengths across the group. The group is sharing best practice on existing partnerships. The group needs to be action orientated and look at new projects.

It was stated that DEFRA is investing £463,000 in 7 projects to promote sustainable tourism. Oliver suggested a possible link into these funding opportunities. A discussion was held regarding promoting the Environment Partnership through this project.

Adrian added that there is £3million available from Government for agricultural projects. Concerns were expressed regarding losing SSSI's. It was stated that the farming community, CLA and NFU should be involved.

The group is looking at the Terms of Reference and a name change has been suggested by some "Natural, built and historic environment". Comments have also been made as to whether objectives and outcomes can be tweaked.

Future work programmes include:- Wildflower meadows, Heritage skills, Heritage at risk, Skerne Project and Profile and engagement.

Future ambitions and issues include pooling knowledge and information on the latest European funding, joining up the approach to volunteering and considering the implications when area based partnership funded projects cease.

Steve Bhowmick added that Councillor Eddie Tomlinson is keen on linking up with other partnerships and other economic partnerships to look at where joint issues are.

It was suggested that a future agenda item could be European Funding; maybe invite Andy Palmer to give information on this at a future meeting.

Positive feedback was given by the group on the work and project areas covered by the Coastal, Heritage and Landscape Group.

#### Environment in Your Community

Julie stated that the group's Vice Chair is Ian Hout. She explained the remit of the group and what the group hoped to achieve i.e. lasting effect in the community, better value for money and greater impact and sustainability by working with communities. The group has agreed that it would focus on food, waste, pride and health and underpinned by a Communications Plan.

Projects the group are championing include the Big Spring Clean, the Dog Fouling Campaign and a Community Centre Allotment idea. The Community

Centre Allotment idea will try to get community centres to adopt local allotments. There will be a labour force of volunteers and it is hoped that the produce can be shared between volunteers, local foodbanks and community centres.

The next meeting of the group is to take place on 13<sup>th</sup> February. The groups timetable activities are as follows:

Winter – Communications Plan and dog fouling.

Spring - The Big Spring Clean and Pondering Rethink Parks.

Summer – Community Centre Allotments and active engagement.

Winter – Working Woods (promotion of woodlands e.g. foraging, logs, etc) and recycling.

Terry asked Julie to give an update of her presentation to the County Durham Partnership meeting next week.

#### Climate Change Group

Steve Hunter reported that there is strong support for the group's 3 key outcomes:-

- Reduced carbon emissions from the domestic, commercial and transport sectors across County Durham
- Adaptation to climate change is co-ordinated, with key agencies and partners working together. Communities are more aware of and resilient to likely impacts.
- County Durham is making a transition to a low carbon economy.

Key partners comprise of Durham County Council, housing providers, Environment Agency, CCU, AAPs, Town and Parish Councils, healthcare providers/trusts, private sector bodies, Durham University and Further Education, County Durham Community Energy and schools.

Key areas of interest include:

Strategy and priority development, communication and community engagement, adaptation to a changing climate, low carbon economy, Energy Efficiency Retrofit, Community Renewable Energy, business energy efficiency and competitiveness, community hubs and action plans, young people and schools and research and best practice.

Strategy into actions:

Response to Strategy consultation/communication strategy, intelligence led priorities, delivering messages relevant to community needs, local ownership of action plans, best practice support, targeted investment, use existing channels and networks, introduction and coordination of delivery agencies, Delivery Agency Forum.

Investment Opportunities include:

ERDF low carbon economy (£16m ring-fenced) but need to find match funding, flood risk mitigation, Warm up North, ECO, feed in tariffs and renewable heat incentives, urban

Julie Form

	<p>and rural community energy initiative, schools, transport and SME's.</p> <p>Performance Measurement indicators were outlined.</p> <p>Steve Bhowmick pointed out that there are opportunities in the County Durham Plan which are instrumental in the delivery of the Council's objectives. The group needs strong buying into that. He added that he can provide assistance regarding the County Durham Plan to Steve Hunter should he need it.</p> <p><u>Local Nature Partnership</u></p> <p>Steve Bhowmick reported that it is the intention for the LNPs to proceed with developing the biodiversity and carbon offsetting proposals with the support from NELEP officers and for the LNPs to put forward a proposal to NELEP. The organisations will be required to sign up to a MoU to show a commitment to partnership working.</p> <p>Funding is now in place (including contributions from Durham and other Local Authorities) to enable a new LNP Partnership Officer post to be created. It is hoped that the creation of the post will strengthen the partnership and provide opportunities for attracting resources/funding.</p> <p>In light of Government funding there is diminished opportunities for the Environment Partnership to work with the LEP. The Tees Valley LEP is very active and strong. A discussion was held regarding the recent paper on Natural Economy. Although there was issues with the paper the main message was strong within it regarding Environment and Economy working together. Julie to lobby key LEP representatives in relation to working with the Coastal, Heritage and Landscape group to promote the Environment Partnership.</p> <p>Adrian and Julie to discuss Working Woods project.</p>	<p>Julie Form</p> <p>Julie Form &amp; Adrian Vass</p>
<p><b>4.</b></p>	<p><b>Environment Partnership Communications</b></p> <p>It was proposed that a representative from the Communications Team should be invited to the next board meeting as there is a need to create a positive, high profile for the group.</p> <p>It was suggested that a Partnership Newsletter should be produced.</p> <p>Group members asked to be added to the circulation list for the County Durham Partnership Newsletter.</p> <p>Vicki pointed out that Environment Week usually occurs in June and Steve Hunter added that Climate Week will be at the end of March (should anyone require more details about Climate Week speak to Stephen Beresford).</p>	<p>Vicki Burrell</p>
<p><b>5.</b></p>	<p><b>Environment Awards Update</b></p> <p>Steve Bhowmick stated that 2014 marks the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the County Durham Environment Awards. Previously the Board resolved it would be appropriate to acknowledge this landmark with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A review of the current scheme.</li> <li>• It's judging process and winning criteria</li> </ul>	

