



**County Durham Environment Partnership Board
Minutes**

**Thursday 10th December 2015
Turner Room, Van Mildert College, Durham**

Apologies

Terry Collins - Durham County Council
 Adrian Vass - Natural England
 Jayne Watson - Durham County Council
 Andrew Turner - Environment Agency

Attendees:

Chair: Julie Form - Groundwork North East

Tara Duncan - Durham University
 Jim Cokill - Durham Wildlife Trust
 Oliver Sherratt - Durham County Council
 Steve Bhowmick - Durham County Council
 Gordon Elliott - Durham County Council
 Tim Wright - Durham County Council
 Councillor Barbara Graham - Durham County Council
 Diane Close - Durham County Council
 Victoria Burrell - Durham County Council
 Stella Hindson - Durham County Council
 Beverley Clark (Minutes) - Durham County Council

Item No.	Subject	Action By
1.	<p>Welcome and Introductions The chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and apologies noted. Introductions were given. Julie thanked Tara for hosting the meeting. It is believed that Adrian Vass has a different role – need to chase this up as he hasn't attended recent meetings.</p>	
2.	<p>Minutes and Matters Arising Tara Duncan hasn't heard back from Jo Laverick - to chase up in January.</p> <p>Oliver Sherratt informed the group that Durham City won the Gold award in the Large Town category in the Britain in Bloom Awards. Durham City has been invited to go forward for Champion of Champions and is going to go for it. In parallel with action already taking place the promotion of In Your Neighbourhood is ongoing (this is a</p>	TD

	<p>grant scheme of up to £500, open to community groups). Stella Hindson highlighted the fact that the Beautiful Durham competition also takes place.</p> <p>Oliver Sherratt is to discuss in the New Year promoting wider Britain in Bloom.</p> <p>Victoria Burrell held a meeting with Claire Thompson to discuss the link to health and the environment. Victoria has spoken to the Corporate team and has given feedback. A refresh of the document is needed from April 2016.</p>	<p>Oliver Sherratt</p> <p>Steve Bhowmick/ Claire Thomson</p>
<p>3.</p>	<p>Woodlands Review Report Presentation</p> <p>Councillor Graham thanked the Board for allowing her time to present the Woodlands Review Report. The report provided the Board with the key findings and recommendations of the Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee review report focusing on the management of the woodland estate owned by Durham County Council.</p> <p>Durham County Council owns and manages approximately 2000 hectares of woodland. Woodlands provide a place of recreation and a habitat to flora and fauna. Woodlands create jobs and create opportunities for education and community involvement. They are also a resource for the County Council and provide an opportunity to generate income from timber extraction.</p> <p>Councillor Graham asked the Board to consider the key findings and recommendations of the report. She added that she had enjoyed the site visits to Croxdale and Hawthorn Dene. During these site visits she had noticed the need to get younger people into the industry. There are difficulties with training and health and safety certificates.</p> <p>The Board discussed the report and positive feedback was given. A need to get young people into the woodland industry was highlighted. Maybe discuss this problem with the Economic Partnership.</p> <p>Councillor Graham stated that she is interested in the work being carried out by The Wildlife Trust in Gateshead regarding the management of estates. Gordon Elliott is to provide Councillor Graham with regard to available funding. Councillor Graham added that in the longer term she's looking at biomass and the future of it.</p> <p>Oliver Sherratt reported that DCC has been carrying out work on tree safety and has been proactive at looking at trees on the highway; there is the need now to look at</p>	

	<p>trees elsewhere e.g. open spaces. He added that DCC gets a lot of requests for tree pruning/felling but DCC has a policy of not felling trees if they are healthy – in due course Scrutiny might want to review that.</p> <p>The Board accepted the key findings and recommendations within the report.</p>	
<p>4.</p>	<p>Environment Awards</p> <p>Steve Bhowmick gave a presentation stating that there was a good entry level this year. There were 66 applications, 38 winners in 12 categories, 2 outstanding awards, 16 awards and 22 commendations. The outstanding awards went to Wear Referrals Veterinary Hospital at Bradbury and to Dylan Etheridge (Young volunteer). There were great comments and feedback from the evening plus media coverage.</p> <p>Tara Duncan added that Durham University had won an Environment Award and had also won a national award at Bristol.</p> <p>Steve asked for ideas for next year’s awards. It was agreed that the awards had been excellent, although it was a long night. A discussion took place on how to reduce the length of the ceremony and the process of judging. Suggestions included that commendations could be highlighted and then the award winner go onto the stage; gold, silver and bronze awards; highly commended awards.</p> <p>In terms of funding it was suggested that Wear Referrals Veterinary Hospital be asked for sponsorship next year – good promotion interest.</p> <p>Ideas for next year’s Environment Awards to be sent to Steve Bhowmick.</p>	
<p>5.</p>	<p>Environment Partnership Communications</p> <p>Stella Hindson circulated copies of the Environment Partnership newsletter and asked that any comments or amendments be sent to her. Gordon Elliott suggested that Stella get in touch with Claire Marshall regarding Volunteering Opportunities (page 4 of newsletter). Julie thanked Stella and her team for all of their hard work in producing the newsletter.</p> <p>Stella asked to be informed if any Caring for your Environment Awards were given in order for them to be publicised. She reminded the Group to use the altogether greener hashtag.</p> <p>It was reported that only one Caring for your Environment Award was handed out over the last quarter.</p> <p>Julie challenged the 3 group chairs to come up with 3</p>	<p>All group chairs</p>

	awards each by the next meeting.	
6.	<p>Updates from Group Chairs & Questions</p> <p><u>Coastal, Heritage & Landscape Group</u> Oliver Sherratt gave an update of the group's work: Issue 11 of The Coastal Heritage and Landscape Steering Group Newsletter has been produced and circulated. The Brightwater Skerne Project has been successful with its bid - £225,000. Heritage at Risk – things are going well; a number of sites have been identified. Limestone Landscape Partnership is planned to finish next year but aiming to get a reapplication for The Village Atlas Project. Work on hedgerows continuing. Wildflowers – hoping for 16 sites next year as this year they have been very successful. Woodlands – work ongoing. Refresh of the Durham Tourism Plans – Steve Bhowmick to circulate to the group. The group was informed that the Land of Oak and Iron was successful in the second round of funding - £2.4m.</p> <p><u>Climate Change Group</u> Tara Duncan reported that the group is moving forward on 3 projects.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building Community Resilience for Severe Weather – the group has decided to hold an event in a community building (Coxhoe Leisure Centre), probably in March 2016. All 40 community groups from the asset transfer process will be invited. Presentations will be given including one on how to save energy. • Working with key stage 4 children on the model shift. Looking at running an event with Thorn Lighting – inviting children to talk about climate change. • Northern Powergrid is running a project – Activating Community Engagement (ACE) which rewards individuals and groups for reducing energy/being flexible with electric usage. There are individual weekly prizes and this incentive work has been endorsed by the Climate Change Group. Tara to forward details to be circulated. <p><u>Local Nature Partnership/DEFRA</u> Jim Cokill provided an update on the work of the group: The LNP merger has gone through; the LNP now aligns more with the LEP. The LNP met with Councillor Henig and Ian Thompson. Work being carried out on natural infrastructure. Health agenda – piloting activity in Durham; The Big Tent Event.</p>	<p>Steve Bhowmick</p> <p>Tara Duncan</p>

	<p>Steve Bhowmick stated that Claire Thompson has spoken to him seeking endorsement from the Board regarding environmental issues to be included in the action plan. This was agreed by the Board.</p> <p><u>Environment in Your Communities</u> Julie Form stated that the group had met with Aycliffe Town Council and it was interesting to find out the work of the Town Council.</p> <p>Aycliffe Town Council carry out areas of work on behalf of DCC, such as nature reserves, footpaths, flowerbeds, etc. and also work with local schools.</p> <p>A discussion took place and it was reported that at the time of the meeting there has been a 34% uptake of the green waste service. There hasn't been a significant increase in flytipping since the introduction of charging for the collection of garden waste. Approximately 64,000 households signed up for garden waste collections this year and it's hoped that this number of households or around 70,000 will apply for next year. Information on garden waste charges of other local authorities was given. It was noted that possibly due to restructuring within the Environment Agency it's been difficult to get a waste focused group to meet.</p> <p>Growing focus – going to link up with Durham Foodbank. A lot of community centres are trying to establish allotments. Allotment Review – how to promote self-management.</p> <p>Family Learning Courses – Groundwork has funding. Julie pointed out that their group attendance is not too good and the group has sent out a survey. Feedback suggests that most people find the group useful but the group needs to be more action focused.</p>	
<p>7.</p>	<p>AOB As part of the Away Day the chairs have been asked 5 key questions to feed back to the County Durham Partnership. Victoria Burrell will email the key questions to the group chairs. She will collate the information and feed back to the County Durham Partnership. Responses to be sent to her by early January.</p> <p>Julie Form encouraged the group to look at a physical activity framework on altogetheractive@durham.gov.uk Julie informed the group that she is leaving her position at Groundwork at Christmas.</p> <p>Oliver Sherratt gave praise and thanks to Julie for all of her hard work and wished her well for the future. Julie replied that it had been an absolute pleasure working with</p>	

	<p>everyone. A Caring for your Environment Award was given to Julie and a photograph taken.</p> <p>Ian Hoults is to take over as chair of Environment in Your Communities in the interim.</p>	
--	---	--