



Northumberland Coast National Landscape

May 2025

Landscape Interpretation Case Studies

Produced by:



Background

This document sets out five interpretation case studies delivered in the Northumberland Coast National Landscape using the new Interpretation Plan.

This interpretation project was part-funded by UK Government through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and the North East Combined Authority Investment Fund with the North East Combined Authority as the Lead Authority.

Aim of interpretation?

For interpretation to support the delivery of the Northumberland Coast National Landscape Management Plan, and really make a difference, new interpretation was developed to deliver the following interpretive aims:

- Raise awareness
- Promote responsible / positive behaviour
- Be relevant to target audiences

Who was the interpretation for?

- Visitors
- Residents

New interpretation is aimed at visitors to and residents of the National Landscape. With these audiences in mind, we needed messaging to be jargon-free and easy to digest.

What was the message?

For interpretive content to deliver aims and be meaningful and relevant to audiences it had to be devised according to interpretive themes.

The central theme for the Northumberland Coast National Landscape is:

Keeping the Peace – We must work together to protect and conserve the tranquillity of this ever-changing landscape.

The sub-themes that support this central theme are:

1. We can maintain the beauty of this landscape by taking positive action.
2. We are all part of this evolving landscape.
3. It takes a lot of work to conserve this landscape.
4. This coast sustains lives and livelihoods.

Different stories were chosen according to the specific context i.e. location, audience and management priorities, to help communicate these themes.

Overall project budget information

The total cost of the new interpretation highlighted in these case studies was £68,267. Of this:

- Design and artwork £9,960
- Manufacture and installation of new signage (case studies 1-4) £43,857
- Digital interpretation (case study 5) £14,450
- Copywriting, base mapping and the majority of artwork was contributed in-kind.

The budget needed to cover:

- Content planning, creation and copywriting
- Design work
- Preparation of artwork
- Filming, editing and production of digital content
- Printing
- Structure manufacture
- Sourcing/commissioning/reproducing photographs, archive images, or new illustrations
- Installation

Each case study presents an illustrative cost breakdown.

Project timetable

The interpretation was developed and delivered in 2024-25.

Due to funding and time limitations, case studies were chosen for locations where planning permission and landowner consent was not required.

Obtaining consents can be a lengthy process and should be factored into any plans to install new physical interpretation.

Materials

Suggested materials as set out in the Interpretation Plan were chosen carefully to ensure consistency, robustness, and ease of maintenance. Delivery challenges and timescales led to some changes, such as the use of powder-coated aluminium rather than galvanised steel, due to lead in times for manufacturing.

QR codes

QR codes were not used on any of the boards due to the risk of 'quishing', where fraudulent QR codes are placed over authorised ones. This is a growing problem, with recent cases in Northumberland County Council locations. A decision was made to use NFC tags instead.

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Case Study 1: Newton Links Car Park

Background

We chose this place to develop one interpretation panel and wayfinding signage because:

- Gateway into partner-managed site, Coast Path and National Landscape
- Presented an opportunity to illustrate how National Landscape branding can work with partner brand guidance / design styles
- Opportunity to highlight sensitive environments (saltmarsh habitat, dunes) and seasonal access restrictions

Who did we work with?

- Northumberland County Council ownership
- National Trust manage adjacent sections of coast



Messaging

- Sub theme 1. We can maintain the beauty of this landscape by taking positive action.
- Sub theme 2. We are all part of this evolving landscape.
- Sub theme 3. It takes a lot of work to conserve this landscape.
- Content includes - A map, what to see at different times of the year, with a special focus on Little and Arctic Terns, how to explore the the National Landscape from this point, links to the work of the National Trust, NFC code to enable people to find out more.

What did we do?

- Installation of a new threshold sign at the car park entrance, consistent with new threshold signs at other car parks in the National Landscape
- Installation of a new printed interpretation panel mounted on existing timber posts in the car park adjacent to the footpath into the dunes. This panel included map with seasonal access restrictions, logos, and text and images related to the identified messages for this site. NFC tag linking to Northumberland Coast National Landscape website and funders plaque mounted one of the timber uprights.

Budget

- Manufacture of threshold sign £893
- Manufacture of interpretation panel, re-using existing timber posts £1,290
- Installation of both items £330
- Design and artwork were an additional cost

Lessons learned

- Working in partnership with other organisations to develop content and ensure fit with multiple branding and communications agendas can be difficult, but achievable providing time is allowed for consultation and close working.
- Re-use of existing timber posts for the panel saved budget and resources.

Case Study 1: Newton Links Car Park



What did people say?

The new information panel at Newton Links car park is a huge improvement. It has contributed to improved presentation of the car park, which creates a good first impression for visitors. The sign effectively puts across some of the National Trust's key messages, and the map which indicates access restrictions during the bird breeding season is a very welcome addition to the permanent signage in that area. We are hopeful that this new sign will help to raise awareness of the importance of this area for nesting shorebirds, and that as a consequence we may experience a reduction in the amount of recreational disturbance during the bird nesting season.

James Porteous, Lead Ranger, National Trust

Case Study 2: Beadnell Bay cluster

Background

We chose this place to develop interpretation because:

- Varied site ownership and partners
- Gateway into the National Landscape
- Seasonality - visitor 'honeypot' and visiting wildlife
- Points of interest both at the car park and located away from beach
- Conservation designations (Conservation Area, Listed Building, Scheduled Monument)
- Lots of existing, confusing signage
- Need to present legal and safety information

Who did we work with?

- Northumberland County Council
- Beadnell Parish Council
- Beadnell boat launch operator
- National Trust
- Beadnell Fishermen's Society
- Historic England

Messaging

- Sub theme 2. We are all part of this evolving landscape.
- Sub theme 4. This coast sustains lives and livelihoods.
- Changeable content to respond to needs at different times of year, information about the changing uses of the coast by people and wildlife in the past (Ebb's Nook) and present, with a special focus on Ebb's Nook, how to explore the National Landscape from this point, links to the work of the National Trust, NFC code to enable people to find out more.

What did we do?

- Installation of a new threshold sign at the Beadnell Bay beach car park entrance
- Replacement of signage on WC wall and removal of outdated signage
- Removal of signage clutter around beach entrance, replacing with two new signs with seasonally reversible panels
- Replacement of signage at Beadnell Harbour, adding interpretative content about the industrial heritage of the village to complement harbour safety information
- Renewal of interpretation panel at Ebb's Nook
- Content includes changeable panels reflecting access restrictions and the wildlife in different seasons, required safety information for the beach and harbour, temporary frame for display of bathing water quality and local community information, text, photographs and newly commissioned illustrations about changing uses of the coast by wildlife and people with twin focus on natural and built heritage, signposting of heritage highlights in Beadnell village, NFC code linking to Northumberland Coast National Landscape to enable people to find out more.



Case Study 2: Beadnell Bay cluster

Budget

- Manufacture of all items £10,310
- Additional £1,000 for new two new watercolour illustrations of the chapel at Ebb's Nook and St Ebba
- Removal of existing items was provided in-kind by a local business
- Installation of all items £450
- Design and artwork was additional cost

Lessons learned

- Testing of materials and technologies is important. Issues with adhesion of printed panels to metal backing and with functionality of NFC tags were not identified prior to installation. Solutions were found and implemented, but this took time and would have been better done as part of design process.
- The cut-out elements of the metal back panels are effective and striking. Achieving a balance between detail and deliverability required close liaison between design team and manufacturer but the effort was worth it for the end result.
- Auditing of the existing signage was helpful and allowed removal of clutter and mixed messaging.
- Collaboration with multiple partners helped to achieve a good end result. There may be opportunities in future to build on the community relationships developed so that other interpretation signage around the village can be refreshed and made consistent with that installed around the beach, harbour, and Ebb's Nook.



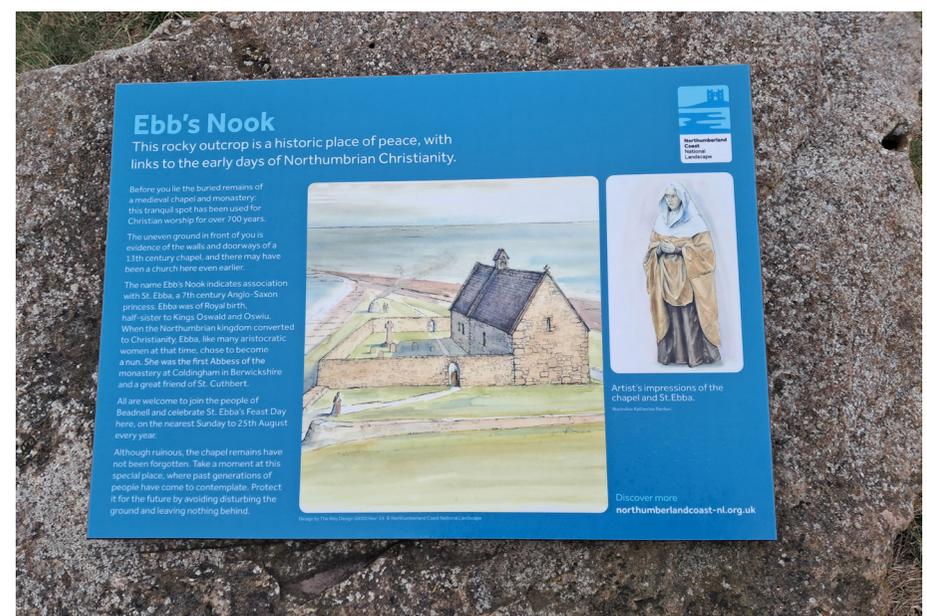
What did people say?

These are special signs for a special area, each unique and with an artistic style that makes them more than just another sign. The cut-out shapes and background colours demand attention and draw the eye and the way the sides bend around the posts to show the location name is clever. The seasonally reversible panels are an excellent idea and keep the information relevant.

Local resident



Case Study 2: Beadnell Bay cluster



Case Study 3: Dr Joy's Garden, Alnmouth

Background

We chose this place to develop one interpretation panel because:

- Adjacent to a Conservation Area
- Existing panel mount / permissions
- Existing Alnmouth heritage trail
- Visitor hotspot

Who did we work with?

- Alnmouth Parish Council
- Local and Conservation Team volunteers

Messaging

- Sub theme 2. We are all part of this evolving landscape.
- Sub-theme 4. This coast sustains lives and livelihoods.
- A changing landscape that needs us all
- The changing face of Alnmouth, highlighting how buildings like the village hall illustrate the



changes over time, key people such as Dr Joy Edelman, wildflower species that can be found here, how to explore the village and the National Landscape from this point, links to the work of the RSPB, NFC code to enable people to find out more.

What did we do?

- Installation of a new interpretation sign, replacing the existing panel that forms part of a village trail
- Supported additional landscaping improvements and planting in the garden, including reinstallation of stone compass feature
- Content includes text, archive images, and photographs about the wildlife of Alnmouth estuary and the history of the village, a map locating Dr Joy's Garden within wider village trail, and an NFC code linking to Northumberland Coast National Landscape to enable people to find out more.
- Content was drawn from the pre-existing panel at this location which forms part of a village trail, with some refreshing of language and additional material.
- The new panel is larger but was designed to be at a low level to ensure that views across the beach and estuary are uninterrupted.

Budget

- Manufacture of new sign £2,066
- Installation £220
- Landscaping and replanting were an additional cost
- Design and artwork were an additional cost

Lessons learned

- Responsibility for maintenance of new interpretation should be agreed in advance and copies of design specifications and artwork should be stored and available should replacement be necessary in future.
- The design used at Alnmouth has received praise in terms of accessibility for children and adults; whilst the decision to create a low-level, angled panel was driven by the setting within the landscape, the result is easy for children and wheelchair users to see and read.

Case Study 3: Dr Joy's Garden, Alnmouth

What did people say?

The refurbishment has transformed a tired, overgrown and broken-down spot into somewhere visitors can pause, reflect and take in the breathtaking natural beauty of this location. It has not only smartened up the site but also made it safer for people with mobility issues, who now can more fully appreciate the history, flora and unique qualities of this vital part of the Northumberland coastline.

It's been a joy to work with you all on Dr Joy's Garden over the last few months. You've given me excellent support and ideas, and I hope we can go on working together in some capacity in the future.

Martin Shingler, local resident and volunteer gardener



Case Study 4: Warkworth Cluster

Background

We chose this place to develop interpretation because:

- Gateway to National Landscape, Coast Path, and picnic site
- Sensitive environments (saltmarsh habitat, dunes)
- Visitor hotspot and used extensively by local residents users
- Signage required refresh, especially arrival and orientation
- Planned accessibility improvements
- Potential for sensory engagement

Who did we work with?

- Northumberland County Council-owned site



Messaging

- Sub theme 1. This is what we're doing – what can you do?
- Sub theme 3. It takes a lot of work to conserve this landscape.
- What to see at different times of the year, with a special focus on birds including Meadow Pipit, Skylark, Redshank, plants including Bloody Cranesbill, and butterflies including Common Blue and Dark Green Fritillary, support to explore the National Landscape from this point, NFC code to enable people to find out more.

What did we do?

- Installation of a new threshold sign at the car park entrance
- Replacement of signage on WC wall and removal of outdated signage
- Installation of new signage at head of stepped and accessible paths to the dunes and beach
- Installation of lectern-style interpretation panel on edge of saltmarsh adjacent to beach path
- Installation of look/listen posts is planned for mid 2025
- Content includes maps indicating access and local circular walk routes, required safety information for the beach, temporary frames for display of bathing water quality and local

community information, text and photographs and about wildlife with messaging to reinforce positive behaviours, NFC code linking to Northumberland Coast National Landscape to enable people to find out more.

Budget

- Manufacture of new signage and interpretation items £11,523
- Installation £880
- Design and artwork were an additional cost

Lessons learned

- Procurement of new interpretation media takes time and requires suppliers with specialist skills and equipment. It was not possible to install the proposed look/listen posts at the same time as other items due to lack of local specialist manufacturing skills.
- Spreading new interpretation items across a location allows visitors to engage with content at various points in their visit, with consistency provided from arrival in the car park through to various points while they explore the area. The new signage also promotes accessible routes and signposts visitors to travel on foot into the village.

Case Study 4: Warkworth Cluster

What did people say?

The new signs are lovely, really bright and interesting information on the wildlife. It's good to have the information in the car park so it doesn't clutter up the beach. The sign at the end of the path to the beach is a bit high for children to read but other than that, I really like what has been done!



Case Study 4: Warkworth Cluster



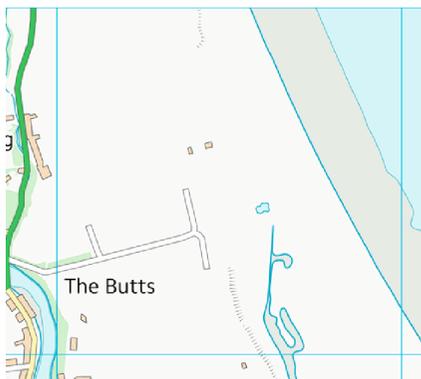
Case Study 5: Digital Films

Background

Five short films were commissioned for digital distribution via the new Northumberland Coast National Landscape website and social media platforms

Who did we work with?

- Locally based videography company Wild Intrigue
- Stakeholders - including local residents, National Trust, land managers and Conservation Team volunteers - were interviewed as part of the filming



Messaging

- Sub theme 1. We can maintain the beauty of this landscape by taking positive action.
- Sub theme 2. We are all part of this evolving landscape.
- Sub theme 3. It takes a lot of work to conserve this landscape.
- Sub theme 4. This coast sustains lives and livelihoods.

What did we do?

- Commissioned production of five short films, two of three-minute duration and three of one-minute duration, to include subtitles and audio description
- Content included interview footage, music, poetry, and background visual and audio film (B roll)
- Uploaded the films to the National Landscape YouTube channel and embedded links to each one throughout the Northumberland Coast National Landscape website.

Budget

- Filming, editing, and production £14,450

Lessons learned

- Developing and sharing a detailed and clear brief was critical in identifying the right videography company and in managing the commission against a tight schedule
- Production against the tight schedule meant that the films only captured a winter landscape; allowing more time for this work would have produced more varied and richer content
- Working with a creative media company with a strong connection to the local area was invaluable. The videographers had an excellent understanding of place and significance, and this shines through in the final films. It was important that the videographers had a degree of creative control over the final outputs, as this brought fresh ideas and a high-quality result.

www.northumberlandcoast-nl.org.uk

<https://www.youtube.com/@northumberlandcoastnl>

Case Study 5: Digital Films



The Blue Lonnen by Katrina Porteous



Caring for the Northumberland Coast National Landscape



Protecting birds in the Northumberland Coast National Landscape



Managing the Northumberland Coast National Landscape



The Northumberland Coast National Landscape

What did people say?

By offering a visually rich, engaging snapshot of the Northumberland Coast, the films effectively communicate the link between people and place. At a time where video is at the forefront of digital content, the films are an asset for highlighting why this area is a protected landscape while also inspiring passion for its protection.

Helen Wilson-Beevers, National Landscape Communications Officer

Northumberland Coast National Landscape

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**Northumberland
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National
Landscape**

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