



Northumberland Coast National Landscape

Northumberland Coast National Landscape Partnership Meeting
4th March 2025, 4pm
Community Fire Station and Local Services Depot, Alnwick

In attendance

Patrick Norris (Chair)	PN	Special Interest Member - Recreation
Charles Baker Cresswell (Vice Chair)	CBC	Special Interest Member – Farming and Land Management
Cllr Adrian Hinchcliffe	AH	Parish Council Rep (South)
Sarah Tunncliffe	ST	Historic England
Liz Humphries	LH	Natural England
Jude Leitch	JL	Special Interest Member – Business and Tourism
Cllr Colin Hardy	CH	Northumberland County Council
Andrew Poad	AP	Special Interest Member – Heritage (National Trust)
Cllr Les Bowman	LB	Northumberland County Council
Cllr Wendy Pattison	WP	Northumberland County Council
Also in attendance		
Zoe Charge	ZC	Northumberland County Council
Iain Robson	IR	National Landscape Manager
Elanor Johnson	EJ	National Landscape Project Officer
Sarah Winlow	SW	National Landscape Officer
Theresa Glynn	TG	National Landscape Admin Officer
Four members of the Public		

1. Welcome, introductions and apologies

Apologies were received from Rob Murfin (NCC), Cllr Guy Renner-Thompson (NCC), Cllr Jen Hall (Parish Council Rep South), Lydia Speakman (NE), Colin Barnes,

2. Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising (not covered on the agenda)

There were no issues brought to the meeting therefore the minutes were agreed as a true and accurate record.

3. Questions from members of the public (maximum of 5 minutes each)

John Holwell, Chathill Rail Action Group (CRAG) requested that the Partnership would formally write to the North East Combined Authority Mayor with support. PN responded that the Partnership would do so, as it is a priority in the Visitor Travel Strategy.

Alison Nation requested support from the Partnership for swim safety and pollution awareness at Beadnell. Although not part of the National Landscapes remit to provide water quality information, PN responded that the Partnership and team will contact The Environment Agency and Northumbrian Water. ST suggested a link be offered to Surfers Against Sewage. EJ noted to add a link or feed to NCNL website, if feasible.

4. Staff team update

4.1 VAIP – Website and digital assets

EJ presented images of the delivered capital elements of the Visitor Access and Interpretation Project (VAIP). New signs have been installed at four locations (Beadnell, Newton Links, Alnmouth and Warkworth Dunes) and incorporate recognition of funders and partnership working.

EJ reported that the new website has been a huge undertaking with the aim to provide a positive and genuine experience, with the key message to protect and regenerate. Content population is ongoing, with a Resources Section planned to include, amongst many other things, Partnership documents. The team would welcome comments and ideas on the content.

<https://www.northumberlandcoast-nl.org.uk/>

4.2 Holy Island Travel

SW reported that while the Holy Island Sustainable Travel and Transport study is complete, there are 6 Appendices only just received which need to be processed, therefore will be presented at the June Partnership meeting. There has been a bespoke team contributing to this, including consultant Martin Higgett and PJA, and close working with the community and the 2050 group who ran a parallel study.

2025 will be a bridging year to dovetail the strategy for the best community implementation. Governance must be led by the Island community with the Northumberland Coast National Landscape facilitating. Many comments were received with all strongly endorsing continued partnership working.

4.3 Generation Green and Nature Calling

SW reported for Generation Green 2 that the final two beach schools and farm visits have taken place, thereby completing this year's delivery. LB

commented on the value of this opportunity for children's experiences, noting one school from his ward.

EJ reported that the national Nature Calling project will soon be recruiting an artist to work with us over the next year.

4.4 FIPL

IR reported that the Year 4 budget is almost spent, highlighting the immediate improvements at Buston Links with the recent FiPL funded works to restore a wetland habitat, The education facility at Broxfield, funded through the FiPL Access grant and at Fenham Granary, a FiPL Historic Farm Building Restoration Grant, are both nearing completion. A request was made for the June Partnership meeting to be held there.

FiPL will continue for another year following an announcement from the Environment Secretary Steve Reed on 26 February 2025. Our 25/26 budget has been received.

4.5 Conservation Team

IR referred to the paper, and highlighted the continual increase in partnership alliances, hours worked, and the numbers of new volunteers from the recent recruitment day. Special mention was made for Ellie Saunders, Countryside Worker Apprentice, who has achieved Distinctions in her assessments.

PN reported that to avoid confusion, the Trustees of the Coast Care Trust agreed to change the 'working name' of the CIO to the 'Northumberland Coast Conservation Trust' to better reflect the name change from Coast Care. The Charity Commission has accepted the new name and a new letterhead etc. will be created. The Trust met recently and agreed accounts for the current year which have now been submitted to the Charity Commission.

4.6 Other Work Streams

IR reported that the new All Terrain Wheelchair is due for delivery, funded from the Defra Access for All Grant. The Conservation Team will trial the wheelchair to map accessible paths.

5. Management Plan review

IR outlined the Review of the Statutory AONB Management Plan and timetable as per the provided paper. The Statement of Significance, Cross-cutting themes and priorities were also circulated, which IR noted that the Defra priorities have been reordered to 'Place, People, Nature, Climate' to better reflect Northumberland Coast National Landscape as a place-based designation. The Statement of Significance will also be an accessible stand-

alone document. The Vision Statement is pitched to be short in length whilst incorporating all elements of the aims and priorities. RS is producing mapping data for the State of the AONB report. Targets from the Protected Landscapes Targets and Outcomes Framework are required to be embedded into the Management Plan.

IR and PN welcomed comments on all themes, aims and priorities.

With consultation of the meeting, PN concluded that all were in agreement of the proposed structure and format of the revised Management Plan. A consultation draft will be available for the June Partnership meeting and will then go to NCC with the North Pennines National Landscape plan for approval. AH requested earliest sight of this for members.

6. Budget 2025/26

IR reported that Defra have still not confirmed the budget for 25/26, although the FiPL budget has been received. PN and IR will inform the Partnership when known.

7. Partnership recruitment and Working Groups

IR reported that the recruitment process was agreed at the Officer Steering Group as per the circulated paper, and there will be a trial run for the recruitment to two vacancies which will be advertised soon.

It was proposed that the five standing working groups are established and where appropriate, will be chaired by the relevant Partnership member with support from the staff team. The Terms of Reference allows for other working groups can be established as required on a 'task and finish' basis.

It was agreed that the Partnership endorse the recruitment process for vacant seats and the creation of working groups.

8. National Update

PN reported that the National Landscapes Association (NLA) are working on behalf of all 34 Protected Landscapes in liaison for the new duties, Levelling Up and Regeneration (LURA), and Defra, with particular reference to the latter in collating a standard land use framework.

IR attended a Lead Officers meeting in Birmingham, whilst PN represented at a Partnership Chairs meeting at Kings Cross in London.

9. Parish Council reports

9.1 Northern Parishes Update

No issues raised from JH.

9.2 Southern Parishes Update

No issues from AH.

AH raised that post 1st May local elections, a repeat of last year's visits by the Team to all PCs is of vital importance, with acknowledgement of time resource.

EJ will be undertaking via the Visitor Strategy remit.

10. Partners' updates

AP had many updates for the National Trust, with this year being 130th anniversary of the national organisation and a new strategy with restoring nature and access as top priorities, and also the centenary of the Farnes Islands guardianship. With the King as Patron, there may be some VIP visits to accommodate. The refurbished building at Newton Point is now operational and 65 local people visited on the Open Day. A new Community in Partnership Officer, Kerry Shaw, will start on 1st April, and whilst Ian Clemmett is now working for Yorkshire Dales National Park, James Porteous is acting up in the Countryside Manager role.

WP noted that with the 1st May elections, there will also be some boundary changes to the Longhoughton ward which is losing Powburn, Ellingham and Edlingham Parishes, and gaining Alnmouth and Lesbury.

LH reported on behalf of Lydia Speakman (Natural England) that although there is currently many changes within NE, including the loss of some staff, they remain committed to the Partnership and collaborative working. Representing WADER Life Project, LH reported that partnership working with the National Landscape Team has continued to increase with support from the Conservation Team volunteers who have followed up invasive species removal works on Bamburgh dunes and support from staff with interpretation utilising the National Landscape Interpretation Plan

CB-C announced this was to be his last meeting, wished all well with continuation of all works, listing some of his active involvement over many years with several organisations in the protection of nature, and concluded with the urge to keep eternal vigilance. PN expressed appreciative thanks for Charles' 22 years of continuous service as vice-chair on the Partnership.

LB noted that with the forthcoming Election on 1st May, if not re-elected, he wanted to thank the Partnership for involvement to date and in recognition of works, will continue in whatever capacity to champion.

11. Dates of next meetings

TBC end June 2025

Venue(s) to be confirmed.