

NGH Community Event – April 6th 2024

Event Notes

What's New in NGH

New members – numbers have grown since December and are now up to 65. Recent joiners have signed up via the new website, others through word of mouth.

New website – launched about a month ago – www.nghonline.co.uk. At this stage, it's intended as a 'shop window' for anyone who wants to find out more or join NGH. Feedback welcomed to northumberlandgreenhub@gmail.com.

To help us streamline the process, it will become the route to join NGH and make sure that everyone receives the Members Guide etc.

Existing members are asked that rather than giving people the latest Digest, to direct them to the website to ensure that all enquiries / new joiners come through the same route. There will be a recent copy of the Digest on the website as an example.

Digest – a huge amount of content submitted by members for the recent editions – thank you. It shows the fantastic range of projects and events that members are involved with.

Deadline for the next edition is April 10th and the editorial team will then pull it together as quickly as possible. Early copy much appreciated to northumberlandgreenhub@gmail.com.

Steering Group – consists of 6 volunteers and is now meeting monthly with lots of work taking place between meetings.

IT Training – apologies we haven't had capacity to move this forward yet. Members asked to indicate if they would like training on WhatsApp and/or using the Google Drive, and what their nearest town is. There is likely to be a small charge to cover room hire costs.

Publicity and Outreach – Steering Group has begun to develop a publicity and outreach strategy and the website was the first element of this. The next stage will require us to look at funding sources, as current activities are funded solely by donations.

Special Interest Groups – our expectation is that each SIG will develop in its own identity and there is no fixed format. However we recognise that for membership of a

SIG to be worthwhile it needs to offer value and include discussions that people want to take part in. We now have 4 volunteer members who will link up with a SG member to act as a 'co-ordinator' for a SIG. The aim is to trial this with 4 of the groups initially and then review. Those 4 groups are –

- Biodiversity & Wildlife – Julia Chambers & Liz Clark
- Arts & Culture – Ali Elly and Colin Elliot
- Community Food – Lesley Long and Jo Hart
- Warmer Homes – Colin Elliot and Martin Laidler.

Other groups will be continuing to operate as they currently are.

Useful Contacts Database – we're still gathering contacts for a range of useful organisations. Please email us with any contacts that you think may be useful and we'll then make this available to all members.

NGH Members Guide – the guide includes the NGH Statement of Purpose, how we operate, benefits and expectations of members re Data Protection and Equal Opportunities. We need to make sure that everyone has signed up and we'll be emailing any members who haven't yet done so. Acceptances are held securely until such time as someone decides they no longer wish to be a member.

Dates for the Diary – The next two NGH Community Events will take place on

- Saturday July 20th
- Saturday October 19th.

NCC's Climate Action Plan 2024 – 2026

This was led by Hannah Davison (Senior Climate Change & Sustainability Manager) and Heather Carlisle (Assistant Project Manager for Partnerships & Engagement). They gave a short presentation providing some background about the new plan.

The plan is significantly broader and more substantial than the previous one. A number of targets have been updated and non-CO2 greenhouse gas emissions are now included – particularly important for Northumberland given the importance of agriculture. The overall target is for NCC to achieve Net Zero as an organisation by 2030 and for Northumberland to be Net Zero by 2040.

The Plan is divided into 3 sections –

- Society – engagement, behaviour change (including the Climate Change Fund which supports community projects)
- Emissions – mainly capital projects such as district heating schemes, warmer homes grant, EV charging points etc. This work is largely grant funded.

- Environment – this is a new area of the Plan and is largely being delivered by other departments of the Council. It includes new recycling requirements, bio-diversity net gain, nature recovery plan, land use and forestry, air quality and agricultural decarbonisation.

The Plan is due to be approved in May, with a formal launch planned for September.

NGH members were then asked to discuss the following question –

Identify ways in which you and your communities could support, promote, engage with and get involved with the implementation of the 3 themes of the 2024 – 26 NCC Climate Action Plan – Society, Emissions and Environment.

The following is a summary of the discussions –

- The new plan is a high level document, and there is a lot of work needed to develop specific projects. It also reviews progress against the previous plan and why actions may not have been achieved. The scope cuts across the whole Council and there is more work to be done to ensure other Council departments are fully engaged.
- A new Council Climate Change website has been developed, which will be standalone from the Council website. This is due to be launched later in the year.
- The good work done by the Climate Team is recognised and supported by the group, but there were concerns that the climate agenda is slipping as a Council priority.
- There was also concern about whether there is sufficient engagement with civil society, especially with regard to driving behaviour change. NGH members are keen to help with this. A number of suggestions were made including developing climate assemblies, developing repair cafes in empty shops, engaging with school clubs, influencing planning decisions, developing local hubs etc.
- There was a lot of discussion about engagement, especially with individuals who are less aware of / concerned about climate issues. The value of shared tasks was highlighted, e.g. repair cafes, beach cleans etc.
- How can Climate Champions be better engaged and empowered ? What is happening with the Climate champions network – and for some NGH members, who are Climate Champions ? NCC responded that new team members will be focussing on engagement and reviewing the role of the Champions over coming months.
- Members were keen that NCC recognise the value of NGH. How can it be more engaged with NCC ? What has happened to the NCC Steering Group which seems to have disappeared. How can NGH link with Councillors / Elected Members to influence decision making.

- The idea of an interactive map showing the activities of NGH member groups was made. NCC may be able to assist with this.
- The Climate Team also plan to work with SMEs / local farmers and landowners to equip them to participate in carrying our carbon audits etc.
- Hannah and Heather were thanked for giving up their time to meet with NGH and for their openness in sharing the new plan and some of the challenges of taking it forward.

NGH Shaping Our Future

It was decided to postpone this item, to enable discussions with NCC to continue.

However NGH members were asked to provide feedback on how NGH is working for them, including for example –

- NGH website
- Digest
- Special Interest Groups
- Amount of communication from Steering Group
- Joining process
- Ideas for future events
- And anything else!

The Steering Group is keen to ensure that NGH reflects the needs of its members and so getting feedback is vital for us to develop.

Finally, members were also reminded to indicate if they would like training on the use of WhatsApp and the Google Drive by emailing Northumberlandgreenhub@gmail.com.