



# Monthly Digest

February 15th, 2025

## News, Events, Funding



Image by Freepik

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### 1. Hub & Steering Group News

#### NGH Steering Group Update

We're really looking forward to seeing members at the next NGH Community Event on March 22<sup>nd</sup>. We're excited to have a varied programme of talks from NGH members. Full details and booking be available soon.

Before then, don't forget '*Space for Nature – A Developer's Perspective*' on March 6<sup>th</sup>. Jointly hosted by NGH and Coquet River Action Group, this is a unique opportunity to learn about how we can protect and enhance nature in the built environment. Find out more in the Events section on page 6.

Some members of NGH have recently completed a two week course on Geographic Information Systems (GIS) funded through the Northumberland Wildlife Trust. We're currently gathering feedback and finding out how members want to use GIS and what further support they need.

Thanks to everyone who expressed an interest in the Digital Skills training. We're currently looking at dates, but it's not too late to sign up – see further details in the Training section on page 9.

We're also currently doing some work behind the scenes on the NGH website. The Resources pages are now easier to access via the menu, which also works better on mobile devices. We'll be making more improvements over the next few weeks so keep a look out!

And finally, the Steering Group currently has a vacancy, and we would like to hear from members who would be interested in joining the group and helping to run NGH.

So, if you're enthusiastic, have ideas to offer and you can spare a few hours a month, then we'd love to hear from you.

To help you decide, you can find out more about what the Steering Group does [here](#).

If you'd like to have an initial chat with a member of the Steering Group to find out more or ask any questions, you can get in touch with Liz, Julia, Mike or Colin or email [Northumberlandgreenhub@gmail.com](mailto:Northumberlandgreenhub@gmail.com).

Please get in touch by March 1<sup>st</sup> if you think you'd like to get involved.

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## 2. Biodiversity & Wildlife



### Northumberland Goes Wild!

The Wilder Northumberland Network has recently joined the national Rewilding Network, an organisation devoted to working together towards a wilder Britain. Launched just last year by Northumberland Wildlife Trust, the network has big plans to scale up nature recovery throughout Northumberland by

increasing connectivity, removing barriers to species movement and creating more space for water, trees and scrub.

The network will also provide members with access to key resources, peer learning opportunities and advice on grazing, surveys and monitoring schemes.

Find out [more](#).

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### Nature North

IMAGE Nature North is a cross sector, cross regional partnership of organisations working for nature recovery across the north of England. Their vision is for nature to be acknowledged by policy makers, the public and businesses as key to the prosperity, wellbeing and resilience of communities in the North. A wide range of organisations such as The Woodland Trust, National Landscapes, The Wildlife Trusts, RSPB England, the National Trust, The Rivers Trust, the Environment Agency, Natural England and National Parks UK are all members of the Nature North Partnership Board. They are presenting a strategic plan for a nature positive regional economy at an event in Sheffield later in February.

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### New habitat scheme at Buton Links



Source: BBC News

Date: 7<sup>th</sup> February 2025

A scheme by Northumberland Estates will provide new habitat for birds and other wildlife to live at an area which is just south of [Alnmouth](#) in the Northumberland Coast National Landscape. It will involve replacement of an old culvert and improvement of the bridleway, raising it above flood level. The project will enable the creation of extended and enhanced areas of saltmarsh, brackish and freshwater

habitat, providing habitat for a range of species, such as wading birds like Curlew and Redshank.

The work will look destructive initially, as large machines will be on site in February. Access for the public along the bridleway and Northumberland Coast Path will be maintained throughout the works.

Find out [more](#).

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## Nature for People and Place Research – River Wansbeck

Thriving Together have shared information about the **Nature for People and Place research** that NICRE is carrying out in SE Northumberland on behalf of the Environment Agency and Natural England. This research is exploring community use of green and blue spaces along the River Wansbeck, from sea to source (catchment [map here](#)) and they would love insight from as many local organisations as possible.

See [www.nicre.co.uk/wansbecknature](http://www.nicre.co.uk/wansbecknature) for more info.

The research is looking at how individuals, community groups and organisations, public services and businesses use (or why they don't use) these spaces. What are the barriers to access and challenges that come up for different groups of people spending time outdoors and engaging with nature? Do you have case studies you'd like to share of how your organisation is helping people experience the benefits of nature, while also improving environmental outcomes - or ideas for future initiatives?

There will be a workshop on 6<sup>th</sup> March in Morpeth, open to all, to share emerging findings. **If you would like to join us for the workshop, or recommend a contact to attend**, please let us know at [nicre@newcastle.ac.uk](mailto:nicre@newcastle.ac.uk). The session will run from **9.30 – 3.30pm** in the **Corn Exchange, Morpeth Town Hall, Newgate Street, Morpeth NE61 1LZ**

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## Massive Tree Loss at Cragside

Storm Éowyn has destroyed trees, estimated to be in the thousands, at the National Trust's Cragside site. This includes a 150-year-old Douglas fir which fell into Debdon Burn and took staff two days to remove. The NT estate at Wallington also suffered similar losses.



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## The Missing Lynx Project – Reintroducing the Lynx to Northumberland

This partnership project between the charities [The Lifescape Project](#), [Northumberland Wildlife Trust](#), and The Wildlife Trusts nationally, is exploring the possibility of reintroducing lynx to Northumberland and the bordering areas of Cumbria and southern Scotland. After a successful tour in 2024, the Missing Lynx Exhibition is going back on the road this year, appearing next at Northumberland College (Kirkley Campus), 24<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> February. Find out more at <https://www.missinglynxproject.org.uk/>

Here is a [walk through video](#) of the exhibition when it was at The Sill National Park visitor centre in Northumberland.

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## 3. Energy Use & Warmer Homes



### Community-owned solar farm moves a step closer

Source: BBC News

Date: 8<sup>th</sup> February 2025

Exciting news from Humshaugh, where residents have been granted planning permission to install about 2,000 solar panels to generate energy for the community. The project will produce about half the electricity currently used by the village. Profits will go into a

community fund providing grants to residents wanting to adopt low-carbon technologies. The project is supported by Hexham MP Joe Morris who has asked the energy secretary to review the potential of community energy plans and provide more support. More information [here](#).



### Take Charge of Your Community's Energy Future

Are you part of a small community in rural Northumberland or Durham? Are you looking for ways to reduce your energy costs and do your bit for the environment?



The **Climate Action in Rural North East (CAIRN)** project is here to help you take control of your energy usage and make a positive impact on the climate crisis.

#### Why This Matters to You

Rural communities often face unique challenges. They rely more on private transport, often use expensive heating oil, and struggle with poor infrastructure. Energy costs can be high, and it's not always easy to access the same support and services available in larger towns. But by working together, we can change that.

#### What We are Doing

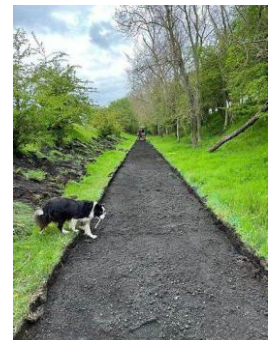
- Community Energy Projects
  - Carbon Assessments
  - Energy Advice for Households
  - Training and Skills Development
  - Engaging with Young People
- 

## 4. Active Travel

### Borderline Greenway Set to Reopen

A disused Northumberland railway line is set to reopen to the public as a multi-accessible greenway on the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its closure. The first phase of the project is nearing completion with a 5km loop in place between Alnwick town centre and the new Greensfield bridge which was installed in November 2024.

The target date for the reopening is March 29<sup>th</sup> 2025. The eventual objective is the creation of a Greater North Northumberland Greenway Trail, across almost 100 miles of former railway lines and cycle routes. Find out more [here](#).



## 5. Rivers, Sea & Coast



### Sewage Data HQ

Surfers Against Sewage have launched a go-to hub to [find real-time sewage discharge data](#) from across England. It shows the operational status of sewage overflows, but is not designed to tell you if it's safe to enter the water.

There's lots of other data at [Data HQ](#) which is also well worth exploring.

[The Safer Seas and Rivers Service](#) (also from Surfers Against Sewage) provides an alert service designed to inform water users when quality is compromised. It uses water companies' data to provide risk assessments, giving alerts about water safety based on up-to-date information.

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## Warkworth and Amble Rivers Update

There was an excellent turn out on 3<sup>rd</sup> February at the cricket club, with an update from Julia Chambers and Jamie Day on how the Coquet River testing is going. Warkworth and Amble testers have collected a lot of data, which is being analysed for trends. We also had Angela Woodburn, commercial and legal manager at Warkworth Harbour Commissioners, also talked about her responsibilities.

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## 6. Arts and Culture

A few months ago, the Arts and Culture Special Interest Group launched a simple but meaningful community project, and it's been incredible to watch it grow!



Winter Trees

Each month, we ask the group for a nature-themed prompt. So far, we've explored *Moving Water* (November), admired *Winter Trees* (December), and in January we celebrated *Lovely Lichen*. The idea is simple: as you're out and about, pause for a moment, snap a photo of something that catches your eye, and share it with the group.

Whether or not you add a comment, sharing your photo gives us all a glimpse of the beauty you see and helps strengthen our connection to the nature we're working so hard to protect.

We'd love to see even more people get involved. If this sounds like something you'd enjoy, come and join us in the Special Interest Group and share your perspective. It's a wonderful way to slow down, appreciate nature, and connect with our community. Let's see what catches *your* eye next!

This month's theme is 'Signs of Life'.

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## 7. Updates from Groups

### Coquet River Action Group

CRAG is nearly a year old. The volunteers in our member groups have been regularly testing water quality along the River Coquet since April last year, and so CRAG has recently undertaken a 'road-trip' from Warkworth to Rothbury via Felton to give some feedback to the testers on the data they have collected.



The headline message is that the river is generally in good health. However, in each region there are a few concerns – a sewage treatment works or septic tank that is spilling sewage into a burn, or a burn with high mineral content from erosion or agricultural fertilizer or from an old mine site. This gives us something to investigate further in the current year to ensure that we keep our river healthy. The presentations from the road-trip will be available on the CRAG website from the end of February.

2025 is shaping up to be an interesting year for CRAG. We are keen to undertake some E. coli testing to ensure that the river is safe for bathers, and we hope to use this information to support a bid for bathing water status for Little Shore in Amble. We hope to work with anglers and other groups to start surveying riverfly (invertebrates living in the river) because this is the

best measure of the overall health of the river. We are hoping to link up with other organisations, including Northumberland Rivers Trust, to survey and remove invasive species from the Coquet catchment. And several organisations (the Environmental Agency, the Northumberland Wildlife Trust, Stronger Shores) have approached us to see if we can work together on some mutually beneficial projects. We will let you know more about these opportunities as they develop.

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## Warkworth Green Matters

We'd like to thank everyone who came to our Annual General Meeting on 1<sup>st</sup> February, and to all of the people who supported us in our first full year. We look forward to another year of Green projects and helping nature in any way we can. A special thanks to Sheila Pearson who is leaving us. Sheila will be sorely missed for her enthusiasm, diplomacy and commitment to getting a job done well.


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## 8. Events



### Space for Nature – A Developer's Perspective

 **Date:** Thursday March 6th

 **Time:** 7.30pm (tea & coffee from 7.00pm)

 **Venue:** Swarland Village Hall, Coast View, Swarland, NE65 9JG

Hosted by NGH and CRAG, this is a unique opportunity for councillors, planners, residents and community groups to find out how we can successfully integrate space for nature within new housing developments and built environments. Learn how Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) and

Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) work and how we can work together to protect and enhance nature.

Speakers: David Abercrombie, Technical Director, Taylor Wimpey North East and Victoria Mordue, Managing Director, Biodiverse Consulting.


Please RSVP to [Northumberlandgreenhub@gmail.com](mailto:Northumberlandgreenhub@gmail.com).

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### Green Matters Community Day - Water and Waste



 **Date:** Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> March

 **Time:** 10.00 AM – 2.00 PM

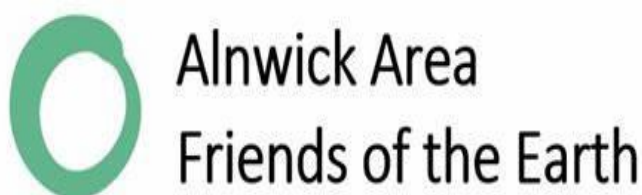
 **Venue:** Warkworth Memorial Hall

Stalls include: Coquet Rivers Action Group, Amble Swimmers, Interactive River Model, Northumberland County Council, Northumberland Rivers Trust, The Co-op Recycling, World of Difference—for refills of washing up liquid! (Please bring your own bottle). Refreshments available!

1pm - 2pm Q & A Session with representatives Hannah Davidson from Northumberland County Council and Steve Lowe from Northumberland Rivers Trust.

For more information, contact: [warkworthgreenmatters@gmail.com](mailto:warkworthgreenmatters@gmail.com)


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### Alnwick Area Friends of the Earth Annual General Meeting




 **Date:** Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> March

 **Time:** 7.00 PM

 **Venue:** Alnwick Youth Hostel, Green Batt, All welcome.

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## Warkworth Village Litter Pick




-  **Date:** Saturday March 29th
-  **Time:** 10.00 AM
-  **Venue:** Meet at Warkworth Market Cross

Join us at 10am at the Market Cross for our annual village clean up in conjunction with Keep Britain Tidy's Great British Spring Clean.

All equipment will be provided, but please bring your own gloves. Any queries, please message Lynne on 07547 071197.

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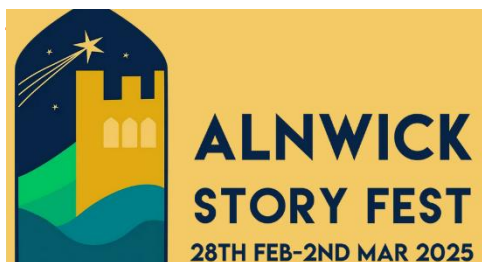
## Hot Mess: What on earth can we do about climate change ?





-  **Date:** Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> February
-  **Time:** 5.30 – 6.30 PM
-  **Venue:** Herschel Building, Newcastle University, NE1 7RY

This lecture from Dr Matt Winning, a climate comedian and environmental researcher, blends comedy and informative content to encourage audiences to think about climate change in a more engaging way. The approach helps to break down barriers and encourages audiences to think about their own behaviours and the societal issues surrounding climate change. Register [here](#).

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## Alnwick Story Fest



-  **Date:** Sunday, 2<sup>nd</sup> March
-  **Time:** 12.30pm
-  **Venue:** Alnwick Playhouse Studio, Alnwick Playhouse  
Bondgate Without, Alnwick NE66 1PQ
-  **Tickets:** £10 from [www.alnwickplayhouse.co.uk](http://www.alnwickplayhouse.co.uk)

WaWW is sponsoring a climate-themed event at Storyfest 28 Feb - 2 March.




In her beautifully illustrated book **Understorey: A Year Among Weeds**, artist and writer **Anna Chapman Parker** records in prose and stunning original line drawings a year spent looking closely at weeds. In gardens, on verges or clustered around municipal lampposts, weeds offer a year-round spectacle of wildlife. What exactly are these vaguely familiar shapes that accompany our every step, yet pass beneath our notice? How and when do they emerge, bloom and subside, and what would it mean to notice them?

In **'Discovering the power of Nature and Mindfulness'** the author in conversation with **Anna Corbett** explores insights from her book.

Find out more at: [alnwickplayhouse.co.uk](http://alnwickplayhouse.co.uk)

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## No Time to Waste

-  **Date:** Sunday, 16<sup>th</sup> March
-  **Time:** 10.00am – 4.00pm
-  **Venue:** Linskill Centre, Tynemouth

The 'No Time to Waste' event is back! It's being held at the Linskill Centre, Tynemouth on Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> March. There will be loads of local eco businesses selling food, craft and everything in-between. Environmental charities attending will let you know what they are working on. There are various talks and



film showing arranged all day and art workshops for adults and children to join in with. It really is a full day!

If you are a business or charity and would like to join us, we have a few tables left. If you have any spare time we are also looking for volunteers to help on the day. If you would just like to come and enjoy the day, you would be very welcome.

Please find us at no\_time\_for\_waste online Instagram and Threads or contact Ali directly [AliEllyDesign@gmail.com](mailto:AliEllyDesign@gmail.com) for more info.


<https://linskill.org/no-time-for-waste-environment-day-at-linskill/>

## Heritage Buildings in Berwick - Adapting to Climate Change

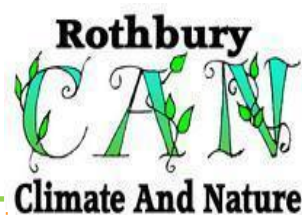


 **Date:** February 27<sup>th</sup>

 **Time:** 9.30 AM

 **Venue:** North Northumberland Voluntary Forum

Join Brian Gowthorpe from Berwick upon Tweed Civic Society and learn about how heritage buildings can be adapted in response to climate change and to reduce energy bills. Arranged by Greener Berwick and the Conservation Area Advisory Group.



## Rothbury CAN - FREE or LOW-COST Events

Rothbury Climate and Nature host a number of mostly free events throughout the year. Here is blog which tells about recent ones:

Find out more at <https://www.rothburycan.org>

## 9. Repair Cafes

1. **Coquetdale Repair Café – Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> March, Jubilee Hall Rothbury 10.00-2.00pm** Combine fun & learning with reducing waste. Have your broken items repaired or learn to repair them yourself with the help of friendly volunteers. Tea and cakes available! Book your repair on our website [www.coquetrepair.co.uk](http://www.coquetrepair.co.uk) or pick up a form in the Rothbury RSPCA shop. Booking really helps us get the right volunteers in place! Email [info@coquet-repair.co.uk](mailto:info@coquet-repair.co.uk).

2. **Greener Berwick Zero Waste Group Repair Café – Saturday 22 February, 10-1pm @ The Salvation Army Hall, 53 Church Street, BERWICK-UPON-TWEED, TD15.** Darning, sewing repairs, toys, phone software, computer software, blade sharpening, general repairs. The repair café runs on the last Saturday of every month, same venue, and same time. Repairs are free but donations very welcome. Tea, coffee and cake provided by Northern Soul Kitchen (Zero Waste).

If you've got a skill and want to experience the thrill of community repairing, please get in touch. We're always looking for volunteers and you don't have to be a professional. All skills welcome.

Brought to you by Greener Berwick and kindly supported by Berwick-upon-Tweed Town Council and NCC Climate Fund. For information contact [info@greenerberwick.org.uk](mailto:info@greenerberwick.org.uk) and put FAO Repair Cafe Team in the Subject heading.

3. **Felton Repair Café – Saturday February 15<sup>th</sup> and Saturday April 19<sup>th</sup>, 11.00am – 3.00pm, Gallery Forty5, Main Street, Felton, NE65 9PP.** All small repairs considered. Clothes, ceramics, small items of furniture, help with IT. Contact [feltonrepaircafe@gmail.com](mailto:feltonrepaircafe@gmail.com).

## 10. Funding & Support



### Community Foundation

Up to £500,000 is being made available to community organisations across Tyne & Wear and Northumberland for environmental and climate-related projects. Re-wilding programmes, recycling and repurposing projects, raising awareness in communities, and improving the

energy efficiency of a building are examples of activities that would be considered. The maximum grant size is £10,000. **Deadline: 31 March 2025.**

### Community Foundation - Climate Action Fund

The [Climate Action Fund](#) will be inviting applications for large-scale projects (minimum £500,000) that link climate action to the everyday lives and interests of local communities, or which have a wider influence through linking up groups nationally across different locations.

Funding will be for partnerships led by community/volunteering organisations or public sector organisations. So, if your group has a big idea and can partner up with others, this could be worth looking at. The deadline is yet to be announced but will be sometime this Spring.

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### NCC Environment and Climate Fund – closing date February 21<sup>st</sup>



Northumberland County Council is offering £50,000 from its Environment and Climate Fund 2025 to community and voluntary groups in the county.

The Fund was launched at an event at the Cramlington Hub, which showcased how previous applicants had used the money to deliver their projects.

Groups can apply for grants ranging from £250 up to £5,000 to help fund projects which enhance nature and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

The fund aims to engage the public on environmental matters and encourage active participation.

The fund is open to community groups, charities, clubs, CICs, social enterprises, town/parish councils, and faith groups (projects must be open to all) and the deadline for applications is February 21<sup>st</sup> and applicants can find all the necessary guidance, terms and conditions and an application form at <https://www.northumberlandnetzero.uk/apply/climate-fund>

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## 11. News from Northumberland County Council



### New Air Quality Strategy Approved

Northumberland County Council has given approval for a new Air Quality Strategy to improve public health and the environment. The initiative aligns with the council's environment policy and net zero targets to address air pollution and protect nature. It will focus on reducing road pollution, integrate air quality considerations with planning and construction and enhance monitoring systems.

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## 12. Training Opportunities

### Digital Voice – IT Skills Training for NGH Members

Digital Voice is a not-for-profit social enterprise which has been delivering digital inclusion projects since 2007. They currently have funding from the Community Foundation and have offered to deliver a **FREE Digital Learning event to NGH.**

They offer sessions on 1) digital graphic design using Canva, 2) creative community consultation using digital media and 3) web and social media management. They would run two of these on the day according to demand, with people able to attend both sessions.

You can find more information about the training [here](#).

It's not too late to get in touch and let us know that you are interested. We're currently discussing a possible date for training which is likely to be in late spring.

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### The Fundamentals of Creative Facilitation

27<sup>th</sup> / 28<sup>th</sup> February, 10 – 4pm, Durham

Creative facilitation brings groups of people together to collaborate, take risks and form meaningful connections. Run by Durham University's Institute for Medical Humanities, this course is free to attend and includes lunch and course materials. Deadline for applications February 20<sup>th</sup>. Participants will be notified by February 21<sup>st</sup> if they have a place.

Apply [here](#).

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### Squirrel Monitoring Training

3<sup>rd</sup> March at 9.30 AM, Gosforth Nature Reserve

Get a background to squirrel biology, ecology and identification. Discover the threats to our native population and what is being done to protect them. Learn how to identify squirrel field signs, how to look for squirrels using wildlife surveying equipment and how to report sightings.

For more information [Squirrel monitoring training Registration, Mon 3 Mar 2025 at 09:30 | Eventbrite](#)

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## 13. March Digest – Copy Deadline

You can send items for the Digest at any time to [northumberlandgreenhub@gmail.com](mailto:northumberlandgreenhub@gmail.com). The deadline for the next edition is **March 10<sup>th</sup> 2025!**



*To ALL contributors to this month's Digest and those working behind the scenes - you know who you are, and your efforts made pulling this edition together so much easier.*

## 13. Summary of Events

(See Digest content for full details of events)

### February

- 15<sup>th</sup> Felton Repair Café, 11am – 3pm, Gallery Forty5, Main Street, Felton.
- 22<sup>nd</sup> Berwick Repair Café, 10-1pm, The Salvation Army Hall, 53 Church Street, Berwick upon Tweed
- 25<sup>th</sup> Hot Mess – What on earth can we do about climate change, 5.30 – 6.30pm, Herschel Building. Newcastle University
- 27<sup>th</sup> Heritage Buildings in Berwick - Adapting to Climate Change, 9.30 am, North Northumberland Voluntary Forum

### March

- 1<sup>st</sup> Warkworth Green Matters Community Day. Warkworth Memorial Hall 10am – 2pm
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Alnwick Storyfest – Alnwick Playhouse Studio - 12.30pm
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Squirrel Monitoring Training, 9.30am, Gosforth Nature Reserve
- 5<sup>th</sup> Alnwick Area Friends of the Earth AGM, 7.00pm, Alnwick Youth Hostel
- 6<sup>th</sup> Space for Nature- A Developer's Perspective. Swarland Village Hall. 7.30pm / Refreshments from 7.00pm
- 16<sup>th</sup> No Time to Waste, 10.00am – 4.00pm, Linskill Centre, Tynemouth
- 22<sup>nd</sup> NGH Community Event, 9.30am – 1.00pm, St James Church Centre, Alnwick
- 22<sup>nd</sup> Rothbury Repair Care, 10.00am – 2.00pm, Jubilee Hall.
- 29<sup>th</sup> Warkworth Litter Pick, 10.00am, Warkworth Market Cross

### Regular Events

Every Monday – Women's Workshop, Amble.

First Tuesday of the month – Climate Action Wansbeck Climate Reading Group. Morpeth Library, 7pm.

Every 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday – Greener Amble Meet Up at Drywater Arts Centre, Amble