



Monthly Digest

April 15th, 2025

News, Events, Funding



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1. Hub & Steering Group News

NGH Steering Group Update

Welcome!

First of all, we'd like to welcome Karen, Cath, Jean, Allie and Alice to NGH and hope you enjoy being part of the network.

June 7th Community Event

We're excited to tell you that we'll have two speakers from Northumberland Wildlife Trust at our next face to face meeting on June 7th. Duncan Hutt (Director of Conservation) will be coming to talk about the Trust's purchase of the **Rothbury Estate**, a 9,500 acre property which it hopes will become a flagship for nature recovery. His colleague Graham Holyoak (Wilder Northumberland Officer) will then talk about the Trust's plans to create a **40 mile wildlife corridor** from Druridge Bay to the Scottish border at Kielderhead. We're just finalising plans for the rest of the morning – so do make sure that June 7th is in your diary. If you haven't been to one of our events before, why not come along? It's a friendly and welcoming atmosphere and a great way to meet other members. Booking will open at the beginning of May – look out for further details coming shortly.

Training
We're offering **free digital skills training** delivered by Digital Voice for Communities on **Tuesday April 29th, 12.30 – 4.30pm at St James Church Centre, Alnwick**. You can find more details on page 3 and on

the NGH website at [Training – Northumberland Green Hub](#). There are still some places left so it's not too late to book.

Getting to know other members

We know that one of the reasons people join NGH is to meet other folk with similar interests. We currently encourage new members to post a few words on the 'Introduce Yourself' WhatsApp group, but we know this isn't particularly user friendly or accessible. So, we'd like to see if there is interest in creating a Directory of Members which would enable people to share some simple information about their interests, expertise, location and contact details.

We want to get a balance between creating something useful but not onerous, and of course we'd need to work out the best way of doing this. To canvas opinions, we'll carry out a WhatsApp poll in the next couple of weeks or alternatively you can email us with your thoughts at Northumberlandgreenhub@gmail.com.

Great Big Green Week

This year Great Big Green Week takes place between June 7th and 15th. You can find information and guidance at <https://www.greatbiggreenweek.com/>. Whatever you are planning as a local group, please tell us about it for the next edition of the Digest.

And finally...

The date of the **September NGH Community Event has been changed and is now on Saturday September 13th.**

2 Communication in NGH



As NGH is growing, we thought it might be useful to provide a short overview of the various ways we use to communicate with members, which include email, WhatsApp and the Digest.

When someone joins, they are added to our email distribution list which we use to send out the Monthly Digest and invitations to our Community Events; occasionally we also send other information by email.

New members are also invited to join the NGH WhatsApp Community. We use this for a wider range of information that we think will be of interest to members – if you've got an event you want to promote, a WhatsApp Announcement is one way of doing that. In a WhatsApp Community only 'Admins' can send messages. Although members can reply, the replies are only seen by the Admins. It's a way to 'broadcast' messages to a group rather than for dialogue.

Once someone has joined the WhatsApp Community, they can then join whichever Special Interest Groups they want to – these 'SIGs' are set up as a WhatsApp Group in the same way as you might with friends or family.

The SIGs are there for members to share news, ideas, ask questions and get support. Each SIG is different. Some are more active than others and some members may choose to read the chat but not necessarily post messages. The extent to which members get involved is entirely up to them.

We've provided some guidance about appropriate etiquette for the SIGs; you can find this at [wa-community-etiquette.pdf](#). We know that not all members want to join the WhatsApp Community, but please be aware that you will not receive all the information that is sent out as an Announcement on WhatsApp.

If you have something you'd like to share with all members that is perhaps a bit longer, you can tell us about it by emailing Northumberlandgreenhub@gmail.com as it may be more suitable for the Digest or the website.

We hope that's a useful summary – if you've got any ideas about how we could improve communication we'd love to hear from you.

3. Training Opportunities

Digital Voice – Digital Learning Session for NGH Members

Digital Voice is a not-for-profit social enterprise which has been delivering digital inclusion projects since 2007. They are teaming up with NGH to deliver a **FREE Digital Learning event** funded by Tyne and Wear Community Foundation.

The training will take place **on Tuesday April 29th from 12.30 – 4.30pm at St James Church Centre, Alnwick**. There will be two sessions, each approximately 90 minutes covering **digital graphic design using Canva and web and social media management**. Everyone will be able to attend both sessions. Equipment and refreshments provided.

It's not too late to book your place! Full details of the event can be found on the Training page of the NGH website at [Training – Northumberland Green Hub](#).

Feedback from GIS Training - Mapping Futures

The ease of using our mobile phones to find directions means many young people cannot read an old-fashioned map or get lost on mountains when the signal fades. In fact, there is a far deeper data revolution in progress with some organisations both providing geographically specific data on a whole range of issues and others using mapping software to analyse it.

Back in January around 20 members of NGH joined with others on an on-line course, organised and supported by the Field Studies Council, which introduced us to QGIS, a widely used open-source mapping programme. The course covered basic principles of data mapping and, mainly through the interaction between participants, created awareness of many sources of environmental data which is structured so that it can be displayed geographically. The course was well facilitated and informative but only introductory. It left us feeling confident that further work would allow us to acquire the necessary skills to fully use the software. The challenge now is perhaps to find the project where the value gained from mapping and linking local environmental information would repay the effort.

4. Biodiversity & Wildlife



Missing Lynx Survey

The Missing Lynx Project is a partnership between The Lifescape Project, Northumberland Wildlife Trust and the Royal Society of Wildlife Trusts. It aims to provide a range of opportunities to listen and to explore people's thoughts and opinions around bringing lynx back and offers different ways for people to engage with the project.

Research has shown that lynx released into Northumberland could grow into a healthy population. The most likely area covers north-west Northumberland, the edge of Cumbria and areas bordering southern Scotland.

You can find out more about The Missing Lynx Project by visiting the [website](#) and take part in the research by completing a [questionnaire](#) exploring attitudes and anticipated impacts to a reintroduction.

Wallington gets share of funding to 'turn the tide' for nature

Source: Northumberland Gazette

Date: March 28th 2025

Wallington is one of four National Trust locations that have been awarded part of £5 million funding from the Garfield Weston Foundation. The Fallowlees Burn corridor on the estate will be transformed through restoration of 173 acres of land, creating wetlands, woods and grasslands. River health will be improved, and it is hoped this may support the return of water voles to the area.



Northumberland Wildlife Trust

The Big Give Green Match Funding for NWT

The Northumberland Wildlife Trust is aiming to raise £160,000 towards protecting the Rothbury Estate.

From noon on Tuesday April 15th to Tuesday April 22nd, any donations will be doubled with match funding. In total the charity needs to raise £30 million to buy the rest of the 9,500-acre estate and has so far raised £6 million.

The Wildlife Trusts charity is currently developing a management plan for the land and will soon be beginning to monitor habitats. See: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c981wpg1n56o>

Biodiversity Boost for Druridge

Northumberland Wildlife Trust have received £750,000 from DEFRA and the National Lottery Heritage Fund's Species Survival Fund, to increase biodiversity in the Druridge area.

Habitat creation and improvement work will involve the restructuring of plantation woodland, reedbeds and waterways as well as the creation of species rich grassland, a wildflower meadow and wetland areas across three of our reserves: East Chevington, West Chevington and Hauxley as well as at Northumberland Zoo.



The project also aims to connect more people to nature. This will be done through volunteer task days and public events. Facilities to watch and learn about native wildlife will be improved by the installation of two new wildlife watching hides and wildlife cameras and access to our reserves will be improved through the creation of new footpaths and bridleways.

5. Active Travel



Borderline Greenway Now Open

On March 29th 2025, the first phase of the Borderline Greenway route opened, sixty years to the day since the original railway line was closed.

A group of around 50 volunteers and supporters gathered at the newly installed Greensfield Bridge, where the Lady Lieutenant cut the ribbon, marking the historic moment.

Over the last four years, volunteers have raised more than £130,000 and cleared trees and vegetation. Ditches have been cleared and a new bridge installed at Greensfield making the route accessible for walkers, cyclists, horse riders, pushchairs and wheelchairs.

The long-term aim is to extend the path from Alnwick to Cornhill as an all-access path. Together with the development of the Tweed Path and the existing coastal path, this would create a 100 mile circular route around Northumberland.

You can find out more on the [website](#). Anyone interested in volunteering to help with track maintenance, litter picking and vegetation management should email VolunteersBorderline@gmail.com.

6. Rivers, Sea & Coast

Great UK WaterBlitz

This biannual campaign is back – and calling on everyone to get out and test the quality of their local river, stream or lake. The data will help to build a national picture of water quality across the UK.

The last event in September 2024 showed that 61% of places monitored had poor water quality. Northumberland was one of the places with the best water quality – but there is still contamination and it's important to capture data on as wide a variety of water bodies as possible.

This years' blitz takes place between April 25th and 28th. To find out how to get involved, visit [Great UK WaterBlitz - Earthwatch Europe](#)



Bathing Water Status Application

The CRAG Little Shore Group has been formed to deliver a community driven campaign to gain Bathing Water Status (BTS) at Little Shore in Amble. The group are working with the Harbour Commission to drive the process forward.

BWS is one of the best ways to protect a river, ensuring that regular testing is carried out. Part of the campaign involves talking to the community and using a questionnaire to try and understand how the beach is used. The questionnaire will be available from May 13th on the [CRAG website](#), and paper

copies will also be available around Amble. The group will be attending the annual Puffin Festival on Saturday May 24th and holding meetings during the bathing season.

To find out more or to get involved, email wariversgroup@gmail.com.

Funding announced for flood defence schemes

Source: Northumberland Gazette, April 1st 2025

The Environment agency has announced nearly £600,000 funding for three flood defence schemes in Northumberland:

- Improvements to Beadnell North Sea Wall to defend against coastal erosion,
- North Northumberland and Budle Bay Coastal Streams habitat works to defend from sea flooding,
- Coquet Estuary Re-Alignment to defend from river flooding.



The investment is part of the Governments 'Plan for Change' aimed at supporting a stable economy in the face of increased flooding risk resulting from climate change.

<https://www.northumberlandgazette.co.uk/news/environment/environment-agency-announces-nearly-ps600000-funding-for-flood-defence-schemes-in-north-northumberland-5061999>.

Scheme to prevent sewer flooding on the River Coquet

Source: Northumberland Gazette, April 5th 2025

Northumbrian Water has invested £500,000 to help protect the River Coquet at Warkworth from sewer flooding. The pumping station next to the river on The Stanners has been converted to utilise a wet well that holds wastewater ready to be pumped. This reduces the risk of sewer flooding and adds resilience to the network.

<https://www.northumberlandgazette.co.uk/news/environment/northumbrian-water-completes-ps500000-scheme-to-prevent-sewer-flooding-on-the-river-coquet-at-warkworth-5067588>

7. Arts and Culture



Each month, the NGH Arts and Culture Special Interest Group ask the group for a nature-themed prompt. So far this year, we've celebrated *Lovely Lichen* in January, *Signs of Life* in February and *Clouds* in March and the current theme is *Light*. 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 '*Light*'.

8. Updates from Groups



Climate Action Wansbeck

Welcome to British Summertime from CAW. We have been spoiled with the lovely sunshine over the last few weeks. Hope you've managed to get out and spot all the wonderful signs of spring.

Newbiggin Climate Group (NCC) have invited CAW members to join them for a combined monthly meeting. The Newbiggin group have been collaborating with CAW over the last few months and had valuable discussions on climate change and mitigation.

We have a regular Climate Change Reading Group which meets monthly (details in the Events section), and you can find out more about the CAW events in the Events section on page 7, including a visit to Fen Letch on May 10th (contact climateactionwansbeck@gmail.com for more information and time of the visit.

For more information about any of our activities, or to get involved, sign up for our Newsletter at www.climateactionwansbeck.org or drop us an email at climateactionwansbeck@gmail.com.

Hedge laying and much much more!

Brinkburn and Hesleyhurst Parish Council's climate change and biodiversity committee ran 3 days of hedge laying courses for beginners in early December 2024. We also added another 1-day course at the beginning of March 2025. The one-day courses were held at Thistleyhaugh farm in Longhorsley. This hedge laying scheme is the second year B&HPC have managed to offer these courses for free, thanks to the support of the Wingates Community Windfarm Fund.



Our goal is to encourage and educate people about the benefits of wildlife, biodiversity, and carbon capture from hedge laying. The students gained knowledge over the day to learn how to lay a hedge using basic traditional tools. David Boyson was the instructor and made the courses very informative, sharing his vast knowledge on this subject.

In early 2024 we carried out our first hedge laying project at our parish playing field located at Embleton Terrace NE65 8JJ. Call in to have a look!

B&HPC have been extremely busy over the last 2 years with projects such as: a bird nest box scheme for declining birds, litter picking, wildflower meadow seeding and scything, river quality testing, base line surveying, hedge laying and much more. This year we will be having scything workshops, a biodiversity event, putting up more bird boxes, hedge laying, surveying using QGIS, river testing, and more.

To find out about our schemes or if you would like to join us in our projects, please contact our Clerk clerk@brinkburn.net or search for our parish council website. Volunteers of all ages are welcome. Special thanks to the Wingates Community Windfarm Fund, volunteers, and landowners which make this all possible.



8. Events



Alnwick Area Friends of the Earth

Northumberland, Climate Change, and Action

Date: Wednesday April 16th 2025

Time: 7.00pm

Venue: St James Church Centre, Pottergate, Alnwick

Alnwick Friends of the Earth are holding a public talk on Northumberland, Climate Change and Action! By Professor Brychan Carey. Find out how climate change could affect daily life in our county, what we can do to prevent it and how local politicians should be responding.

Doors open at 6.45 pm and attendance is free. For more information contact Alnwick Friends of the Earth.



Go Wild in your Garden!

Date: Saturday April 26th 2025

Time: 10.00 – 12.00pm

Venue: Vyner Park, Swarland

If you'd like to get some hands-on experience of making a variety of habitats for nature in your garden, book a place on this free workshop organised by Swarland and Newton Action on Climate and run by Natasha Hemsley from Northumberland Wildlife Trust.

To book a place, contact Talktosnac@gmail.com.

Climate Action Wansbeck



Newbiggin Climate Group have invited CAW members to join them for a combined monthly meeting on April 28th at 7pm at the Ink Spot, Newbiggin.

On May 7th the Climate Reading Group meets to discuss the published report by Christine Ho on Lynemouth Biomass burning. The group meets on the first Tuesday of the month, upstairs in Morpeth Library, 7.00 – 8.30pm.

If you know Morpeth's beautiful [Millenium Green](#), on Bakehouse Lane, you might be interested in helping to keep it looking lovely. If you don't know it, why not take a look? The Millenium Green Volunteers meet from 10.00 am to 12.00pm on the second Monday of the month. Tools and coffee are provided. The next event will be on May 12th.

For more information about any of these activities, contact climateactionwansbeck@gmail.com.

River Wansbeck Findings

 **Date:** Wednesday May 7th 2025

 **Time:** 3.00 – 4.30pm

Between January and March this year the National Innovation Centre for Rural Enterprise has been exploring how people connect to nature along the River Wansbeck.

You can now join them for a webinar to explore the findings of the Nature for People and Place research project, commissioned as part of the Nature Returns programme.

Book your place through Eventbrite [here](#).



Ashington Eco Fair

 **Date:** April 25th 2025

 **Time:** 10.00 – 3.00pm

 **Venue:** Ashington Hirst Welfare Centre

Ashington's first Eco Fair will include opportunities to see projects that are helping to tackle climate change, speakers talking about conservation and sustainability, the chance to buy local produce and gifts and information about implementing water saving and energy efficient appliances.

Climate Action Wansbeck will also be running a stall alongside Full Circle (a food and health charity), focussing on food sustainability and waste.

For more information about the event visit

www.ashingtontowncouncil.gov.uk or contact 01670 624521.



People, Planet, Pint – Sustainability Meetup

 **Date:** Tuesday April 22nd

 **Time:** 5.30pm

 **Venue:** The Forth Pub, Pink Lane, Newcastle, NE1 5DW

Special Earth Day meeting. For free tickets, visit

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/1273711698979>

Thriving Together Network Event

 **Date:** Tuesday April 29th

 **Time:** 10.00am – 12pm

 **Venue:** Longhoughton Community & Sports Centre, NE66 3JH



These networking events are a chance to grab a coffee and chat with like-minded people. The Thriving Together team will be on hand to introduce you to new contacts. There are no formal presentations, just good conversation with great people from across Northumberland's voluntary, community and social enterprise sector. To book a place, please complete the [booking form](#).



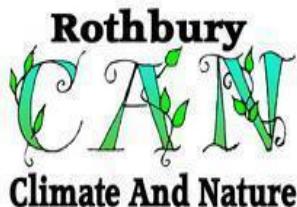
Greener Berwick Spittal Beach Picnic

Date: May 17th

Time: 3.00pm

Venue: South end of Spittal Prom

In support of Surfers Against Sewage nation action day on sewage spills. Potluck picnic and optional ankle paddle.



An evening of poetry and music

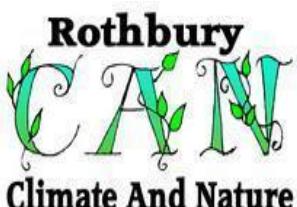
Date: Thursday June 26th

Time: 7.00 for 7.30pm start

Venue: Rothbury Golf Club

Rothbury CAN, Coquetaile Creatives and What a Wonderful World present an evening of poetry and music, including Mike Pratt, nature writer and author, Jane Burn, award winning poet, Rod Clements, musician and others.

Tickets £8, book via at <https://whataww.org> or <https://coquetailecreatives.art>.



Summer Solstice Creative Wellbeing Retreat

Date: June 21st

Time: 10.30 – 4.00pm

Venue: Valley View Cottage, Rothbury

A day retreat dedicated to the power of creativity and its positive impact on our mental health and well-being. Cost £60 including lunch and refreshments

For more information and to book your place, contact

Creativespacene@gmail.com.

10. Repair Cafes

1. **Coquetaile Repair Café – Saturday June 21st, 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.coquettorepair.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.

2. **Greener Berwick Zero Waste Group Repair Café – Saturday April 26th, 10-1pm at The Salvation Army Hall, 53 Church Street, BERWICK-UPON-TWEED, TD15 1EE.** 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 and put FAO Repair Cafe Team in the Subject heading.

3. **Felton Repair Café – Saturday April 19th, 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.

We do small electrical repairs, knife and tool sharpening, sewing, toy and ceramic mending, IT advice and digital restoration of old photos. The latest additions are jewellery cleaning and advice on repairs, advice about old phones, tablets, laptops etc, making these safe and how to recycle them. Bicycle repairs are no longer available, but basic IT instruction is - but it must be booked in advance.

11. Funding & Support



Northern Powergrid Foundation

Twice a year, Northern Powergrid Foundation offers grant funding of up to £20k to community resilience projects. Projects include setting up community hubs with solar panels, heat pumps and generators to ensure safety during power outages, helping them to become self-sufficient and reduce energy waste.

The grant window is open until May 11th 2025. More details [here](#).

12. News from Northumberland County Council



Supporting Nature in Green Spaces – Consultation

The County Council Cabinet has recently received a report on its Environmental Policy Action Plan including details of a project titled 'Supporting Nature in our Green Spaces'. This will include a detailed review of its Grounds Maintenance Service. The aim is to develop a new operating model that is efficient, provides value for money and defines a set of standards to improve biodiversity.

The work is being support by Newcastle University to ensure there is a strong evidence base. Part of the project will include a 'Community Conversation' to find out if people think that it is important to improve the biodiversity of our green spaces. This [survey](#) is now open to the public, with a **closing date of April 21st**. Participants in the survey will also be asked if they wish to participate in future research about the new operating model.

If you've been concerned about cutting regimes in your area, this is your chance to have your say!

The report, and others considered by the Cabinet can be found at [here](#).

13. May Digest – Copy Deadline

You can send items for the Digest at any time to northumberlandgreenhub@gmail.com. The deadline for the next edition is **May 10th 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.

16. Summary of Events

(See Digest content for full details of events)

April

- 15th SNAC, Talk on 'Wild about Gardens', 7pm, Swarland Club, Coast View, Swarland
- 16th Alnwick Area FoE, 'Northumberland, Climate Change and Action', 7.00pm, St James Church Centre, Alnwick
- 19th Felton Repair Café, 11 – 3pm, Gallery Forty5, Main St, Felton
- 22nd People, Planet, Pint, 5.30pm, The Forth Pub, Pink Lane, Newcastle
- 25th Ashington Eco Fair, 10.00 – 3.00pm, Ashington Hirst Welfare Centre
- 26th Greener Berwick Repair Café, 10.00 – 1.00pm, Salvation Hall, Berwick
- 29th Digital Skills Training, 12.30 – 4.30pm, St James Church Centre Pottergate, Alnwick
- 29th Thriving Together Networking Event, 10 – 12pm, Longhoughton Community and Sport Centre

May

- 7th River Wansbeck, People and Place Webinar, 3.00 – 4.30pm
- 17th Greener Berwick Spittal Beach Picnic, 3.00pm, south end of Spittal Prom
- 25th Ashington Eco Fair, 10.00 – 3.00pm, Ashington Hirst Welfare Centre
- 29th Digital Skills Training, 12.30 – 4.30pm, St James Church Centre Pottergate, Alnwick

June

- 7th NGH Community Event, 10.00 – 1.00pm, refreshments from 9.30am, St James Church Centre, Alnwick
- 21st Rothbury CAN, Summer Solstice Creative Wellbeing Retreat, 10.30 – 4.00pm, Valley View Cottage, Rothbury
- 21st Coquetdale Repair Café, 10.00 – 2.00pm, Jubilee Hall, Rothbury
- 26th Rothbury CAN and WaWW, An evening of music and poetry, 7 for 7.30pm Rothbury Golf Club

Sept

- 13th NGH Community Event, 10.00 – 1.00pm, refreshments from 9.30am, St James Church Centre

Regular Events

Women's Workshop, Amble - every Monday

Climate Action Wansbeck Climate Reading Group. Morpeth Library - first Tuesday of the month

Greener Amble Meet Up at Drywater Arts Centre, Amble - every 4th Thursday

Swarland and Newton Action on Climate, third Tuesday of the month.