



Monthly Digest

May 14th, 2025

News, Events, Funding



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1. Hub & Steering Group News

Welcome

First, we'd like to welcome new members Katherine, Caroline and Michael to NGH. We hope you enjoy being part of the network.

Funding News!

We're very excited to share the news that **NGH has been awarded funding for the next twelve months**. The funding has been awarded as part of Northumberland County Council's Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise infrastructure support contract, delivered under the banner of Thriving Together Northumberland.

Until now, NGH has operated purely on donations, but the new funding will enable us to cover running costs such as room hire, the website, printing etc. We're particularly grateful for all the support we've had from Helen Andrews, one of Thriving Together's Community Connectors who has supported NGH from the beginning.

As a result of the funding, we're now in the process of opening an NGH bank account and we've developed a constitution that we've put on the [NGH website](#). We'll hold our first AGM later in the year and give full details of how you can take part.

NGH Community Event – BOOK NOW!



The next Community Event is just over three weeks away, and we're looking forward to seeing many of you and hearing from our two speakers - Duncan Hutt (Director of Conservation) and Graham Holyoak (Wilder Northumberland Officer).

Duncan will be talking about the Trust's purchase of the **Rothbury Estate**, a 9,500 acre property which it hopes will become a flagship for nature recovery, and Graham Holyoak will then talk about plans to create a **40 mile wildlife corridor**

from Druridge Bay to the Scottish border at Kielderhead.

As it's also the start of **Great Big Green Week**, we'll be holding our first **Great Big Green Book Swap** – so bring along your unwanted 'green' books and swap them for something new!

If you haven't been to one of our events before, why not come along and meet some great people? It's a friendly and welcoming atmosphere - and there are always biscuits! You can **see the full programme and book your place at [Community Events – Northumberland Green Hub](#)**.

FREE Digital Design Software

Elsewhere in the Digest you can read about the Digital Skills training which members of NGH attended at the end of April. Part of the training included the use of Canva, a powerful digital graphic design tool. Canva makes it easy to design posters, presentations and social media content and is widely used for creating publicity materials.

Access to Canva Pro usually costs £100/year per person, but we are delighted to say that **NGH has 50 FREE Canva Pro accounts** for community groups which are part of the network.

If your group would like to take advantage of this offer, please email Northumberlandgreenhub@gmail.com with the name and email address of the person who will be the user(s).



And finally...the date of the **September NGH Community Event is Saturday September 13th**.

2. Great Big Green Week



Great Big Green Week is the UK's biggest celebration of community action to tackle climate change and protect nature. During the week, communities, schools, business and other organisations join together to put on all sorts of events to bring people together and show politicians and decision makers that together, we care about tackling climate change.

In 2024, 600,000 took part and this year organisers anticipate a million people will come together to be part of a wave of actions for friends and family, climate and nature under the theme '**Let's swap together for good**'.

We can all make small swaps, large swaps and swaps that change the system and which contribute to making our communities better. By coming together, we can send a message to our politicians and decision makers that transformative change, swapping old ways for better ways, is needed now. When we unite to swap together for good, we can protect and restore nature, lessen the impact of climate change, strengthen our communities, and build a future we're proud to pass on to the next generation.

This year, **Great Big Green Week takes place between June 7th and 15th**. You can find loads of ideas, information and resources at <https://www.greatbiggreenweek.com/>.

Free publicity for Great Big Green Week events

Environmental journalist Graeme Anderson is looking for details of any activities anyone is carrying out around Great Big Green Week, so he can put the news in a round-up article that can be circulated to the local press in Northumberland.

Graeme, who has written for all of the North East media over many years, now works for the [Local Storytelling Exchange](#), which highlights positive stories of the green transition happening across the country.

Graeme, who is the Exchange's North East correspondent, said: "I've got quite a broad scope so the public activities can either be directly associated with Great Big Green Week or events can simply be happening the same week or even in the run-up to GBGW. *"Research has shown that activities that are simply linked to GBGW can attract up to a third more visitors than they might normally do."*

There's no charge for Graeme's work, which effectively means free publicity for environmental activities happening at this time.

You can contact Graeme on gsamedia4u@gmail.com, or call him on 07739 300 692.

3. What a Wonderful World



Thursday 26th - Sunday 29th June 2025

Pre-festival events - 21st June Hepple Wilds - take a walk in the wilds

Celebrating Trees exhibition 25th June – 5th July

Dear Friends at Northumberland Green Hub,

The world suddenly seems a more hostile place right now, but we have to keep our heads clear and hold on to hope.

We now have pleasure in announcing our 4th WaWW Festival celebrating the beauty and wonder of our planet. We hope you will book your tickets and tell your friends.

One of our themes this year is trees. To get people thinking and responding we are asking people to nominate their favourite tree(s). Send a picture and a few words to be published in the Gazette and social media. To take part go to <https://whataww.org/your-favourite-tree>. We expect some brilliant ideas from the public and possibly one or two leading 'tree people'!

This is a taster of what we have in store at this year's WaWW Festival -

Saturday 28 June **Earth Matters - Simonside and Beyond**

Can the purchase of Rothbury Estates by the Wildlife Trusts help lead the search for a balance between nature recovery, farming, and local communities? Professor Alastair Driver, (ex-Rewilding Britain) busts some myths on rewilding. Join the discussion with him, Mike Pratt (Northumberland Wildlife Trust), and James Barber, local farmer and land manager. Chair: Tom Burston.

Saturday 28 June **Maddy Prior Concert**

Maddy Prior, lead singer of Steeleye Span, will headline the Saturday night Concert at Alnwick Playhouse. One of the most influential singers in the country and a dynamic solo performer, Maddy will be accompanied by Spud Sinclair on guitar in a special set of songs which will highlight her long-held commitment to the natural world and humanity's place in it.

Kate Fox, poet and humorist will perform 'The Soil Speaks' and extracts from her book 'On Sycamore Gap'.

25 June - 7 July **Celebrating Trees Exhibition, Alnwick Playhouse Gallery**

Local people guided by artist Anna Corbett celebrate trees in paint, fabrics, poetry, and stories.

And so much more: visit **Hepple Wilds** with artist Rose Ferraby. **Poetry and Music** at Rothbury, **Poets Go Wild** at Hauxley Discovery Centre, **Earth Summit** a new play with music for and by young people,

Working Wood talk by local creative professional, reading and play for 3 - 6 year olds at Alnwick Library and **Sing for the Planet** workshop and concert with Werca's Folk and VoiceMale.

Please go to our website to see the full programme and updates.

Tickets are on sale NOW from www.whataww.org and alnwickplayhouse.co.uk 01665 660550.

See you at the end of June. Come along and be part of the push-back!

Thanks for your support - Liz and Alistair Anderson and the Team - now joined by Carol Whinnom our new Coordinator.

PS. We also need volunteers for a stall at Alnwick Market on 29th May. CAN YOU COME ALONG FOR AN HOUR?

Contact Carol on whinnom@virginmedia.com.

4. Biodiversity & Wildlife

The farmer going the extra mile

National Hedgerow Week, at the beginning of May was a chance to celebrate all that's amazing about our hedgerows. We asked Judy Fortescue, farmer and member of NGH to tell us about the work she's doing on her farm to protect this incredible habitat.

Judy farms in partnership with her husband, Lenny and two sons, Charlie and Nick. They farm Glantlees, near Newton on the Moor and Tughall which is between Embleton and Beadnell. Last year the family took on the tenancy of Shildykes and Snipe House which are adjacent to Glantlees.



At Glantlees, Judy has let the hedgerows grow high and wide, providing valuable habitat for wildlife. However, the ancient field boundaries on both new farms are lined with historic remnants of hedges and in some places are devoid of any hedges at all.

Judy principally farms beef cattle, so the value of new fences and hedges is of major importance. Hedges provide stock, particularly young stock, with shelter in hard weather. They are also a vital aid in the effort to increase biodiversity. They are wildlife corridors which provide food, shelter and nesting sites for birds. Their blossom supports bees and a huge

variety of other insects. They provide a refuge for small mammals - and vole and mouse food for barn owls when they venture too far into field margins! Hedges help to stabilise soil and prevent soil run off and their role in sequestering carbon is becoming increasingly understood by the scientific community.

Between 1988 and 2001 Judy ran a small tree and hedging nursery, and with the knowledge gained in those years she has begun the task of growing as many hedging plants as possible to reinstate the hedgerows on the family's new land. She will be growing hawthorn, blackthorn, hazel, crab apple and a variety of hedge row trees, such as rowan, bird cherry and whitebeam etc. With the assistance of a capital grant from DEFRA and some help from members of SNAC, Judy hopes to plant about 10 miles of hedges over 3 years. It's a major undertaking which Judy says is '*somewhat daunting*' but it will leave a legacy that will benefit wildlife for many years to come.



Funding for Reds

Source: Northumberland Gazette

Date: 7th May 2025

Northumberland Wildlife Trust has received a £4.86 million grant from The National Lottery Heritage Fund for the five-year Red Squirrel Recovery Network (RSRN) project.

This initiative aims to protect and conserve red squirrel populations in northern England and southern Scotland, where they are under serious threat due to the spread of invasive grey squirrels. Led by Northumberland Wildlife Trust, the project brings together various conservation organisations and volunteer groups to safeguard the species. During a 12-month development phase, the team gathered essential data on squirrel populations and volunteer involvement, and designed strategies including fertility control for grey squirrels.



The project will now work with landowners and communities to expand conservation efforts, offering grants for local projects and organising educational and engagement events. A key goal is to grow the volunteer base and deepen public connection with nature through red squirrel conservation. The National Lottery Heritage Fund praised the project for helping ensure the red squirrel becomes a lasting part of the UK's natural heritage

Carbon capture company wins international prize

Source: BBC News

Date: 3rd May 2025



Following a Newcastle University study at Nafferton Farm in Northumberland, carbon capture company UNDO, has won a £5m prize for the development of a project to capture carbon from the atmosphere – and increase crop yields by 20%.

Basalt rock found in the soil in north east England was crushed into dust and given to farmers in tests which were published last year. Results showed that even in a bad year for crop growth, the use of the rock dust increased yields.

The company hope that enhanced rock weathering will become a common farming practice.

5. Rivers, Sea & Coast

Consultation Starts on Bathing Water Status

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

Little Shore is a much-loved beach area, which, when the tide is right is one of the safest areas for swimmers and recreation. It is sheltered, accessible and provides a safe space for introducing people of all ages to water-based activities.



BWS is one of the best ways to protect water quality. It will mean that there is regular monitoring and reporting, plans will be put in place to improve / protect water quality and the public will be made aware

of the results. For post-industrial Amble it also means quite rightly that it will be brought into line with the protected areas surrounding it.

The application has many parts and will be reviewed by DEFRA and other bodies. by ensuring that regular testing is carried out. Part of the process involves talking to the community and CRAG Little Shore are leading a community consultation starting in May. 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. There will also be surveys going on in the summer to count the number of people using the area. So please don your water shorts and come and dip your feet in whenever you get the chance!

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

6. Active Travel

On yer bike – Northumberland Cycling Campaign



On Friday, Northumberland Cycling Campaign chose Berwick as the first in series of cycle rides across the county. The campaign group which now has 173 members, seeks to bring like-minded cyclists together to work towards better cycle routes and facilities in the county.

Riding a bike is the most sustainable means of travel particularly for short journeys and more people say they would cycle if roads were safer. Join us to receive our newsletter and updates by emailing nlandcyclingcampaign@gmail.com.

7. Arts and Culture

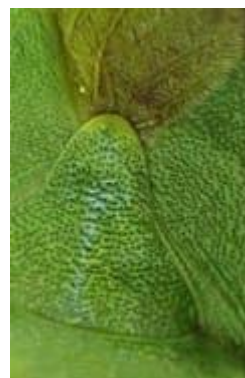
Each month, the NGH Arts and Culture Special Interest Group ask the group for a nature-themed prompt. So far this year, we've celebrated *Clouds* in March, *Light* in April.

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 'Can you guess what it is?' (The answer for the photo here is on page 11).



8. Updates from Groups

New Hotel Opens in Vyner Park

There was a fantastic turnout for Swarland and Newton Action on Climate's recent workshop on *How to Make Habitats for Nature*, held in Vyner Park and led by Tash Hemsley from Northumberland Wildlife Trust. With support from the Vyner Park team and with plenty of materials to hand, participants of all ages came together to build a variety of wildlife-friendly structures.

Under Tash's expert guidance, the group constructed a large bug hotel and a hibernaculum, while smaller teams worked on a hedgehog house, a bat box, and a bird box. It was a practical, hands-on session that brought the community together in support of local biodiversity.




This workshop followed on from Tash's inspiring talk, *Go Wild in Your Garden*, and we hope it will encourage more local residents to add wildlife-friendly features to their own green spaces.

All the structures made during the session will stay in the park and form part of an evolving nature trail, which also includes the existing one-acre wildflower meadow—an important haven for pollinators and other native species.



9. Events




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.



Vintage Clothing Event – for the beauty of the earth




-  **Date:** Wednesday May 21st
-  **Time:** 6 – 8pm
-  **Venue:** Howick Hall

Pre-loved and recycled garments and accessories to be sold in the Chinese Room and the Old Dining Room at Howick Hall. Admission is free and all proceeds will go to Friends of the Earth and Coastland Parishes.

Bring your own cup for free tea, coffee and biscuits.

NGH Community Event






-  **Date:** Saturday June 7th
-  **Time:** 10.00 – 1.00pm (refreshments from 9.30am)
-  **Venue:** St James Church Centre, Pottergate, Alnwick, NE66 1JW

NWT's Director of Conservation, Duncan Hutt will be talking about their acquisition of the Rothbury Estate and Wilder Northumberland Officer, Graham Holyoak will talk about plans for a wildlife corridor from the coast to the borders.

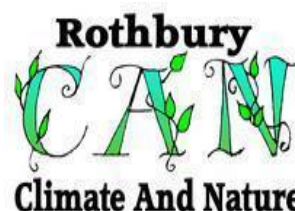
Plus, The Great Big Green Book Swap and time to meet other members and find out what else is happening.

View the programme and book your place [here](#).

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.



The North East Summer Gathering

Date: Saturday June 21st, 2025

Time: 10.30 – 16.30pm (followed by evening celebrations)

Venue: Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art – Gateshead Quays

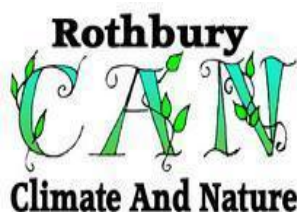
We would love to welcome members of the Northumberland Green Hub at our annual come together moment for Friends of the Earth group members and the wider social justice community from across the Northeast!

Book your free place for a day of inspiration, learning and connection: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/north-east-summer-action-gathering-2025-tickets-1310357026139?aff=oddtcreator>

You can expect the latest on regional and national campaigns and actions, inspiring stories from across the network and beyond and opportunities to delve deep into new skills and opportunities. Followed by an afternoon where we will explore the Baltic's exhibitions linked to refugees, collaborate with others in the space and celebrate the solstice into the evening with food and fire – **book a later train if you can!**

Not to be missed! **It will be a powerful day – inspiration guaranteed.**

Contact: Carla.doran@foe.co.uk for more details



An evening of poetry and music

Date: Thursday June 26th

Time: 7.00 for 7.30pm start

Venue: Rothbury Golf Club

Rothbury CAN, Coquetdale 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://whatawww.org> or <https://coquetdalecreatives.art>.

10. Repair Cafes

Coquetdale 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.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.

Greener Berwick Zero Waste Group Repair Café – Saturday May 25th, 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.

Felton Repair Café – Saturday 14th June, 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.

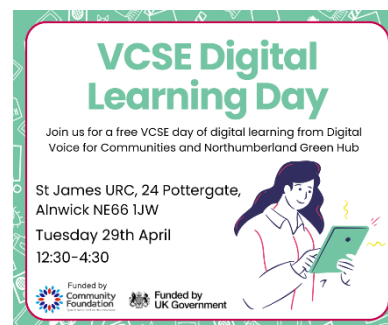
We do small electrical repairs, knife and tool sharpening, sewing, toy and ceramic mending, IT advice and digital restoration of old photos. The latest additions are jewellery cleaning and advice on repairs, advice about old phones, tablets, laptops etc, making these safe and how to recycle them. Bicycle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

11. Training

NGH Hosts Skills Training with Digital Voice

Nearly twenty members of Northumberland Green Hub (NGH) and other local community groups came together recently for a very successful Digital Skills Training programme, delivered by the award-winning social enterprise, Digital Voice for Communities.

Digital Voice specialises in promoting digital inclusion through creative, community-focused projects. Their work includes *GeoStories*, which helps people explore shared heritage; *iSkills*, which teaches digital photography and filmmaking; and *DigiTale*, a powerful digital storytelling initiative.



Over the course of two engaging sessions, participants were introduced to a range of practical tools and techniques. The first session focused on **Canva**, a versatile graphic design platform ideal for creating posters, presentations, social media graphics and more. The second session explored the basics of **web and social media management**, offering valuable insights into how to communicate effectively and grow your online presence.

Very well presented. Good fun and you learn a lot!

Both sessions were informative, hands-on, and full of useful tips—with plenty of opportunity for questions and experimentation.

We're keen to hear from NGH members about what digital skills they'd like to explore next. Possible topics include **How to Podcast**, **Creating Digital Media**, and **Effective Online Working**—but we're open to other suggestions too!

If you're interested in future training opportunities, please get in touch at northumberlandgreenhub@gmail.com.

12. News from Northumberland County Council

LOVE Northumberland Awards

Applications for this year's LOVE Northumberland Awards are open. Community groups, schools and individuals can enter their environmental projects and initiatives for this annual celebration of activities which help to keep the county clean and green.

Entries are invited for:

- Best urban project
- Best coast or countryside project
- Best young people's project
- Best community response to the climate change emergency
- Outstanding individual.



The closing date for entries is Sunday June 1st 2025 at midnight. Full details can be found [here](#).

Winners are presented by Her Grace the Duchess of Northumberland at an event at The Alnwick Garden on Thursday July 10th 2025.

Climate Champions

The Climate Change Team have recently sent out minutes from the last Climate Champions meeting in April. Revised Terms of Reference for the Climate Champions Network were discussed, together with a draft Climate Champion Volunteer Role description. This defines a Climate Champion as someone who has direct access to residents and/or businesses in Northumberland and is willing to:

- Help spread awareness of climate change;
- Get involved in climate activity in their area;
- Share and engage with their communities on actions they can take to help achieve the ambitious targets in the NCC Climate Action Plan 2024 – 2026;
- Feed back to NCC on the work they're doing in their communities'
- Be role models for sustainable activity.

Comments are invited on both of these documents by Friday May 23rd – if anyone who isn't on the current NCC circulation list wishes to view these, please email Northumberlandgreenhub@gmail.com and we will forward them to you.

The next Climate Champions meeting is on Thursday July 10th from 4 – 5.30pm, via Teams.

13. June Digest – Copy Deadline

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

(The answer to the 'Do you know what it is?' question on page 6 is a Green Shieldbug).

14. Summary of Events

(See Digest content for full details of events)

May

- 17th Greener Berwick Spittal Beach Picnic, 3.00pm, south end of Spittal Prom
- 25th Greener Berwick Repair Café, 10.00 – 1.00pm, Salvation Army Hall, 53 Church Street, Berwick, TD15 1EE

June

- 7th NGH Community Event, 10.00 – 1.00pm, refreshments from 9.30am, St James Church Centre, Alnwick
- 14th Felton Repair Café, 11.00 – 3.00pm, Gallery Forty5, Main Street, Felton
- 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 – 29th What a Wonderful World Festival
- 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 – Garden Group at the Workshop, every Wednesday 10.30 – 3pm.

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.

Berwick Repair Café, last Saturday of every month, 10 – 1pm

Campaign Dates in 2025

Clean Beaches Week 1st – 7th July

Love Parks Week 25th July – 1st August

National marine Week 27th July – August 11th

National Water Quality Month August

Organic September

Great British Beach Clean 19th – 28th September

National Tree Week 27th November – 5th December

World Soil Day 5th December