

NGH Monthly Digest

April 15th 2026

News, Events, Updates and More!



Contents

1. Hub & Steering Group News – p1
2. Feed the Birds – p2
3. Rivers, Seas & Coasts – p3
4. Climate Crisis Response-p3
5. Northumberland Food Strategy-p3
6. Tree Preservation Orders-p4
7. Updates from Groups – p5
8. Events – p6
9. Repair Cafes – p9
10. Funding – p10
11. Training – p11
12. April Copy Deadline – p11
13. Events Summary – p11
14. Regular meetings- p12

1.NGH & Steering Group News

We had a near record turnout for the NGH event on 21st of March listening to a really interesting talk from Cath Basilio and Pip Sharp on Future Friendly Gardens, inspired in part by two workshops they had recently attended.

This was followed by a fascinating talk/ performance from Sonia Ritter on the work of the Whittingham Churchyard Nature Project which aims to ‘to investigate, sustain and enjoy a haven for wildlife: to nurture a place of peace for people and respect for those who are gone’.

Jo Thomas of Greener Berwick then talked us through the process and results from a number of small

community created green spaces in the town. There was, as usual, plenty of time for networking and pursuing ideas one on one.

Websites linked to the various talks include

<https://www.talkingplantssheffield.co.uk/>

<https://www.wildinggardens.co.uk/>

<https://www.greenrooforganisation.org/>

<https://www.greenerberwick.org.uk/growing-communities-action-group>

The next in person event will take place on September 12th and is being organised by Ali Elly and Mike Powell. It aims to explore the use of art as a means of engaging people whilst at the same time promoting reflection on water and all its many impacts on our local environment from the highest tarn to offshore regeneration. If anyone has any interest in contributing to the event on some aspect of water, please get in touch with Mike on m.powell@pop3.poptel.org.uk

New Member

A big welcome to new member Liz G – we hope you enjoy being part of NGH!

2. Feed the Birds

Of particular note this month is new guidance published by the RSPB on feeding garden birds. This has been prompted by the spread of a highly contagious disease (trichomonosis) which passes from bird to bird very readily at bird feeders and bird baths. It is thought to be behind a 67% reduction in populations of Greenfinch, which have been very badly affected.

The suggested approach is to:

Feed seasonally. Feed Safely.

The risk is greater during the summer and autumn and so the RSPB is asking that we stop feeding birds artificially from the **1st May to the 31st October** - in particular, we should cease the use of seed and peanuts in bird feeders during that time, though a small amount of mealworms, suet or fat balls is alright.

The full range of food can be offered again in November but here the message is to keep bird feeders and bird baths scrupulously clean.

More detailed information is available on the RSPB's website: [Our latest guidance on what and when to feed garden birds: Feed Safely, Feed Seasonally](#)

Whether we should be feeding birds artificially has been the cause of debate for some time now. As with many things, the bird feeding 'industry' is just that and there is growing concern that it is in itself causing an impact on our environment. Bird foods are often produced overseas in areas not subject to the environmental controls that we have in the UK, and sometimes on virgin ground, which affects biodiversity locally. Add to that, the impacts resulting from packaging and transportation, let alone the risk of disease.

A much better approach is to provide natural sources of food and water in our gardens. As we heard at the Future Friendly Gardens talk, there is so much potential in the space that gardens occupy in the UK and we really can make a difference by changing the way we look after them. Pip and Cath will share the resources from their talk and set out the key messages of the day in the May edition of the Digest, but in the meantime, here are some things we can do to help support our garden birds naturally:

As we heard in the Future Friendly Gardens talk, **The Bigger the Buffet in the Basement, the Better the Party on Top!** Anything we can do to support soil biology and invertebrates, which form the bottom of the food chain, will in turn help the birds: leave some areas unmown all year, keep dead stems and seed heads standing over winter and when you do cut them down, 'chop and drop' (cut them into different sized lengths and leave them on the ground as a mulch) and keep leaf litter in situ where you can. All of these things will encourage insects, molluscs and worms - bird food!

Grow plants and habitat that provide food and shelter - this include small trees, hedging, dense shrubs, grasses and herbaceous plants. Jack Wallington has put a useful list of planting suggestions together including Hawthorn, Rowan, Crap apple, Holly, Elderflower, Blackberry, Raspberry, Redcurrant, Knapweed, Ivy, Honeysuckle, Teasel, Thistles, Wild grasses and Echinops spp. Growing caterpillar food plants will help too (nettle and garlic mustard are the obvious ones but you can find out which plants support specific butterflies and moths at www.butterfly-conservation.org.)

Dig a pond! This is a much longer term project of course and not everyone will have the room but larger expanses of water are less likely to spread trichomonosis than bird baths and ponds also attract insects - bird food again. If you do use a bird bath the RSPB recommends that this is cleaned daily.

3. Rivers, Sea & Coast

Felton Environmental Improvements

Northumbrian Water will investigate five Storm Overflows and a Sewage Pumping Station within the Felton drainage catchment. Three overflows are within the vicinity of the sewerage treatment works located on the periphery of the village on the east side of Felton. Two further overflows, Main Street Felton and New Hall Farm Longframlington, will be studied along with Swarland Fence sewage pumping station positioned adjacent to Fence Burn between Longframlington Gardens and Swarland Old Hall.

The initial survey work will not be intrusive and disruption will be minimal. As the project develops, Northumbrian Water have committed to share ideas with the community to understand their views and how they can minimise any disruption once the construction work is underway.

Start Date: Construction commencing Spring 2027

Investing in Drainage

Northumbrian Water have also started to scope improvements to the performance of the sewer network, a project has recently been launched which will see up to £47m invested in the Felton drainage catchment over the next 5 years. This work will ensure sewerage services meet the needs of current and future generations by improving water quality of the River Coquet by reducing storm overflow spill frequency for the benefit of residents, the environment and wildlife.

The details on improvement proposals are not currently available but it is likely that the solution will involve a combination of surface water separation, sustainable drainage solutions such as nature-based attenuation basins, rain gardens and tree pits along with more conventional drainage improvements such as storage tanks and upsized pipework and chambers.

[Northumbrian Water improvements in Felton | News | Felton Parish Council](#)

4. Climate Crisis Response

National Emergency Briefing

A new film, hosted by Chris Packham, launched on 6th April brings together key moments from the National Emergency Briefing in Westminster last November. It is an eye-opening message where leading UK scientists explain what the climate and nature crisis means for our food, health, weather and the cost of living.

The film will be screened at Dry Water Arts Centre, Amble on Sunday 24th May 6.30pm. Following the 50 minute film featuring Chris Packham and leading scientists there will be a facilitated discussion. There will be a bar from 6pm - screening at 6.30pm

<https://www.drywaterarts.uk/pop-up-event/emergencybriefing> (booking required)

Other screenings are already planned at various venues across Tyne and Wear in May / June. You can find one near you using the interactive map, with links to book tickets. Many are free. Some are charging to cover costs. [National Emergency Briefing](#) (map)

5. Northumberland Food Strategy

The second meeting of the Warkworth Food Group hosted a presentation from Alex Black from Northumberland County Council, explaining the next steps in the action plan for the Northumberland Food Strategy.

Changing the food system is a complex issue and not one that can be done quickly, easily or by the council alone. The next steps for the council include:

- Adopting / encouraging good food production and consumption. Food banks, food co-ops, reducing food waste, regenerative agriculture.
- Supporting food businesses.
- Procurement in public services – council, NHS Trust, fire and rescue, schools etc
- Place based approaches – supporting groups at a community level.

There are links to the local nature recovery strategy looking at land use, and the Environment and Nature grant fund (through Northumberland Net Zero) for community organisations.

The Group welcomes anyone who shares our concerns about the food system. The current system doesn't seem to benefit farmers, growers, small food producers, the public or the environment. We're interested in what we can do, including lobbying on policy issues and small practical projects, to create change.

Let us know if you would like to be added to the group – email www.foodgroup@gmail.com

6. Tree Preservation Orders



Are Your Trees Protected? Probably Not.

Unless you live in a conservation zone or the National Park, even the oldest and most trees near you are probably not protected. That is, unless they have a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) on them.

TPOs are issued by the County Council. However, they are not automatically applied unless you ask for one. Even then, the TPO can be refused. You can apply for your tree to be protected using Form 031, which you can download from the website.:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5b06c81de5274a1c5490ce6f/Form031_england_en_revised_2_.pdf

The decision to award a TPO is based on the amenity value (its visibility, size, rarity, and historical value), health, and risk of the tree or multiple trees. While one strong application is better than ten weak ones, having multiple people, neighbours, or local groups send in separate, detailed letters of support can strengthen the case by demonstrating community value. In your application be specific by clearly identifying the trees, their location, (what3words.com and Google Earth are useful for that), species, and why it holds high amenity value.

Provide evidence by including photos, videos, and evidence of the trees' role in the landscape and then highlight any risk. If it is threatened by development, explicitly state this, as TPOs are often created in response to imminent danger. If a tree is under imminent threat, a single, detailed request highlighting the risk is sufficient to trigger an emergency temporary TPO (valid for 6 months).

Once a TPO is in place, any further work requires a separate, formal application, making it much harder for the tree to be felled. If a previous TPO application was refused, a new application can be considered but only if circumstances have changed or new evidence, preferably from multiple expert sources, is provided.

7. Updates from Groups



Coquet River Action Group

On the 1st April exactly 2 years ago our volunteers took the first water samples all at the same time throughout the length of the River Coquet. It's hard to believe we first got our meters, dippers and rubber gloves on all that time ago. There are now over 46 testing points on the River Coquet and its tributaries. Hundreds of measurements have been taken covering a myriad of weather and river conditions, spanning the months/years, from spring to Estuary at a consistency no other river testing can emulate. This information is being used to collaborate with Universities, the Environment Agency, Northumbrian Water and other groups to provide real insight into the Coquet's water quality and health. We want to send a big thank you to all those wonderful volunteers who have got involved.

One milestone in this journey is of particular note - the Little Shore application for Bathing Water Status. We have passed all the DEFRA milestones and are awaiting the final confirmation, hopefully by the middle of April! We are going to celebrate and hope you can all join us in this.

Little Shores Big Splash - May 24th 11.00 on Little Shore Beach, Amble

Come with in your bare feet or wellies, kayaks, paddle boards or knotted hankies and raise a cheer as Team GB Ice Swimmer Fenwick Ridley joins the team for the Big Splash!

<https://swimferal.co.uk/blogs/community/gb-ice-viking-fenwick-ridley>



CRAG Little Shore and the Swimmers are also running sandcastle competitions between 2 and 4pm over Saturday and Sunday, stories in the Cock and Bull and a stall full of interest.

If you would like to get involved in CRAG, email coquetriveractiongroup@outlook.com.

Climate Action Wansbeck



More than 40 people attended the CAW meeting on the 26th March, with speakers from CRAG, The River's Trust, Environment Agency and Groundworks. After the talks we formed two groups, one to discuss the river Wansbeck from the estuary to the Sheepwash bridge/weir and the other to discuss the Wansbeck further upstream to Wallington. Outcomes of the discussions will be collated for future planning.

CAW has been successful in receiving a grant from Northumberland CC to purchase water testing equipment for a trial period in looking at the condition of the river water.

CAW member Paul Thompson spoke about the Wansbeck's River Project at Newbiggin Environment Network's event Safer Shores on 31st March at the Community Hub Newbiggin.

Warkworth Green Matters and Greener Amble Network

A few of us who are passionate in the fight against litter have got together to organise litter picks and beach cleans in this area. As a sub group of Warkworth Green Matters, we welcome volunteers to come and join us.



We recently organised a litter pick on Amble Braid. A fabulous 15 people showed up and between us we collected 19 bags of rubbish along with an old bike! We have also made Amble Town Council aware of rubbish dumped on private land that nobody wants to take responsibility for, including an old piano.

Picks are being planned for the rest of the year.

April 18th - Warkworth area

May 23/24th - Support for Puffin Festival

June 12th - Hadston area


Please note: each litter pick requires pre-registration to help with organising and equipment requirements. Please register your interest at litterfree@icloud.com


8. Events

Amble Women's Workshop – Green / Eco Session

Join in making willow panels for the outdoor kitchen. All welcome.

 **Date:** Wednesday 15th April


 **Time:** 11am – 2pm

 **Venue:** Women's Workshop, Coquet Enterprise Park, Amble

Stronger Shores Shoresearch

Join the Marine Engagement Officer and explore the coast as we record the abundance of life along our shores.

 **Date:** Sunday 19th April

 **Time:** 9.30 – 11.30

 **Venue:** Newbiggin - see www.nwt.org.uk/events/2026-04-19-stronger-shores-shoresearch



Longhoughton Community Gardeners

 **Date:** Sunday April 19th 2026

 **Time:** 1 – 3pm

 **Venue:** Longhoughton Community Orchard

Join us for the **Grand Opening** of the **Longhoughton Community Orchard** and help celebrate this wonderful new space for the village. The official ribbon cutting will take place at 1:15pm.

We are currently collecting donations of plants for the plant stall and prizes for the raffle and would be very grateful for any contributions.

To keep up to date with what we're doing, follow us on social media [@longhoughtoncg](https://twitter.com/longhoughtoncg). If you'd like to get involved or find out more about volunteering, please email longhoughtoncg@gmail.com.

Springtime Forage & Feast.



Date: Tuesday 21st April and Sunday 26 April 2026

Time: 10:30 - 13:30

Venue: Hauxley Wildlife Discovery Centre, Northumberland

Foraging outdoors and cooking with Northern Wilds. Supported by Northumberland Wildlife Trust

[Men's Pie Club: Natural Ingredients with Northern Wilds | Northumberland Wildlife Trust](#)

Thriving Together Networking Event

Date: Tuesday, 21st April 2026

Time: 10am - 12pm

Venue: Felton Village Hall, Main St, Felton, Morpeth NE65 9NH.



Please confirm your attendance by completing this booking form [TT Networking Event 21 4 26 Booking Form](#).

Any questions? Email: admin@thrivingtogethernorthumberland.org.uk and we'll be in touch.

Community Foundation Environmental Conference



Join Community Foundation North East and the Environmental Funders Network to explore how place-based philanthropy and funders can support local communities by investing in and promoting a sustainable environment.

Date: Tuesday, 21st April 2026

Time: 12 – 6.30 pm

Venue: Wylam Brewery Palace of Arts, NE2 4PZ

For full details and to book, visit [Register your place – Environmental Action: Funding, People and Place – Wylam Brewery Palace of Arts](#)

NICRE - Help Shape the Future of the River Coquet

NICRE and Natural England are researching how people live, work, and interact with the River Coquet to develop a new Protected Sites Strategy. VCSE staff and volunteers are invited to share their perspectives at a dedicated focus group.

Date: Tuesday, 21st April 2026

Time: 12.30 – 2.00pm (lunch provided). This follows the Thriving Together networking event

Venue: Felton Village Hall, NE65 9NH.

Book: [Click here to register](#) or email nicre@newcastle.ac.uk

Film - Our Land + Q&A

Date: Wednesday April 29th

Time: 6pm




Venue: Tyneside Cinema

[Tyneside Cinema: Our Land Documentary + Q&A](#)

Our Land asks the question 'who has the right to roam in the English countryside?' Includes Q&A with Philip Le Marquand and Jo Aris of Right to Roam.




Northumberland Organic Market

Organic fruit and veg, bread, coffee, flowers, food trucks and more

-  **Date:** Friday May 1st.
-  **Time:** 4-8pm
-  **Venue:** Rennington Village Hall.




Bat Walk

-  **Date:** Saturday 2nd May
 -  **Time:** 8:30-9:30pm
 -  **Venue:** Valley Park, Cramlington - Meeting point Park entrance at Welbury Way.
- www.nwt.org.uk/events/2026-05-02-bat-walk



**Northumberland
Wildlife Trust**




Dawn Chorus

-  **Date:** Sunday 3rd May
 -  **Time:** 6.00am - 8.00am
 -  **Venue:** Hauxley Wildlife Discovery Centre, Low Hauxley
- [Dawn chorus | Northumberland Wildlife Trust](#) – booking required






**Northumberland
Wildlife Trust**

CAW's regular reading session

-  **Date:** Tuesday 5th May
-  **Time:** 7-8.30pm
-  **Venue:** Morpeth Poetry Library



Alnwick Friends of the Earth AGM

-  **Date:** Wednesday 6th May
-  **Time:** 7-8.30pm
-  **Venue:** Alnwick Youth Hostel.




Alnwick Area Friends of the Earth welcomes new members. Why not come along to this meeting to find out what we are planning for 2026?



**Friends of
the Earth**


Green Gossip

Warkworth Green Matters invite you to share your ideas and concerns about the environment and enjoy tea and cake.

-  **Date:** Friday 8th May
-  **Time:** 2.30-3.30pm
-  **Venue:** Cricket Club Warkworth.

The Green Table in Berwick on Tweed

 **Date:** Thursday 14th May

 **Time:** 11- 2pm

 **Venue:** Berwick Voluntary Centre in Berwick upon Tweed

The Green Table Northumberland is a series of roundtable events for organisations and community groups working to advance renewable technologies and carbon reduction measures.

Booking required: [The Green Table @ Berwick-Upon-Tweed Tickets, Thursday, May 14 • 11 AM - 2 PM | Eventbrite](#)

Friends of the Earth X Baltic: The Midsummer Gathering

We'd love to invite friends and supporters of the Northumberland Green Hub to The Midsummer Gathering, brought to you by Friends of the Earth X Baltic, on **Friday 20 June, 10:30–17:00, at the Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art in Gateshead.**

This year's gathering is proudly part of Refugee Week, and the day will conclude with evening celebrations hosted by Baltic.

Free food will be provided throughout the day.

Book your free place: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/the-north-east-summer-gathering-tickets-1981747238337?aff=oddtcreator>

What a Wonderful World Festival

June 25-28th 2026 Alnwick, Northumberland

Most of What a Wonderful World's events are at the festival's home venue, Alnwick Playhouse. Some other events are at other venues in the Alnwick area, and across Northumberland.

It is exciting that JON BODEN will be the headline performer on 27th June. Book your tickets quickly, as this event likely to sell out! To keep up-to-date with further 2026 festival events. [Festival 2026](#)

9. Repair Cafes

Coquetdale Repair Café – Saturday April 25th, 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. 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. Tea and cakes available.

Felton Repair Café – Saturday May 2nd, 11.00 – 3.00pm, Gallery 45, Main Street, Felton, NE65 9PP. Contact feltonrepaircafe@gmail.com.

Volunteers will be there to sharpen knives and garden tools, fix small electrical items, answer IT queries, fix toys and broken ceramics, mend or patch loved items of clothing, mend wooden items and clean and check gold or silver jewellery.

Greener Berwick Zero Waste Group Repair Café – Saturday April 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. Visit <https://www.greenerberwick.org.uk/repair-cafe>.

Berwick Tool Library is also now operating. Visit <https://berwicktoollibrary.myturn.com> or contact info@greenerberwick.org.uk for more details.

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.

Amble Repair Café – is bimonthly, the next session is Saturday 16th May, 2.30 – 4.30pm, Dry Water Arts in Amble.

Volunteer repairers cover sewing, darning, toys, small electrical appliances, sharpening, ceramics and small items of furniture. Enjoy tea and cake while you wait for your repair. For further information please see: [Repair Cafe May 16th - 2.30pm - 4.30pm — Dry Water Arts Centre](#)

Morpeth Repair Café – Saturday May 2nd, 9.30 – 12.30, Wellspring Church Hall, Dark Lane.

Repairs for electrical items, clothing, toys and mechanical items.

Warkworth Repair Café – Warkworth Repair Cafe Saturday 13th June and 15th August 10am-2pm.

Memorial Hall Castle Street Warkworth. Electrical, woodwork and sewing repairs. Also computer support and magazine swap.

10. Funding

Environmental Action: Funding, People and Place

Community Foundation are hosting an Environmental Conference on April 21st, to explore how environmental funding can support local communities.

[Register your place – Environmental Action: Funding, People and Place – Wylam Brewery Palace of Arts](#)

Free Trees for Schools and Communities

The Woodland Trust is giving away free packs of native trees. The packs come in a variety of sizes and any educational establishment, all kinds of local authorities and not-for-profit community groups can apply.

visit [Free Trees for Schools and Communities - Woodland Trust](#).

Wingates Wind Farm Community Grants

Grants of £250 - £5000 are available to constituted groups, parish councils and schools based in Brinkburn, Hesleyhurst, Longhorsley, Netherwitton, Nunnykirk or Rothley and Hollinghill covering projects that benefit the community. **Deadline 11th May**

For more information contact Julia Plinston at 01670 517178 or email communityfunds@ca-north.org.uk.

Veolia Environmental Trust

The Habitat and Biodiversity Grant Scheme funds projects that improve habitats, creating healthy environments for native species. The projects should aim to protect biodiversity and create sustainable, carbon-neutral spaces.

The minimum grant request is £10,000. Whilst project sites can be accessible to the public, projects should not be for community use. Next funding window opens on 20th August 2026

For more information visit [Eligibility checker - Veolia Environmental trust](#).

11. Training

Free First Aid Training

Did you know that the British Red Cross offers FREE First Aid Workshops for adult volunteers and community groups? Learn CPR and how to use a defibrillator.

[Face to face workshop session bookings | British Red Cross](#)



12. May 2026 Digest – Copy Deadline

The deadline for the next edition is **May 8th 2026** but you can send items for the Digest at any time to northumberlandgreenhub@gmail.com

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 Events section for full details)

April

- 15th Amble Women's Workshop – Green / Eco Session, 11am-2pm
- 19th Longhoughton Community Orchard Opening, 1-3pm
- 19th Stronger Shores Shoresearch, 9.30-11.30, Newbiggin
- 21st & 26th Springtime Forage & Feast. 10.30 – 1.30, Hauxley
- 21st Thriving Together Network Meeting, 10 -12pm , Felton Village Hall
- 21st Community Foundation Environmental Conference, 12- 6.30pm, Wylam Brewery
- 21st Help Shape the Future of the River Coquet, 12.30 – 2pm, Felton Village Hall
- 25th Coquetdale Repair Café, 10-2pm, Jubilee Hall, Rothbury
- 25th Greener Berwick Zero Waste Group Repair Café, 10-1pm, The Salvation Army Hall
- 29th Film: Our Land, 6pm, Tyneside Cinema

May

- 1st Northumberland Organic and Local Market, 4-8pm, Rennington Village Hall
- 2nd Morpeth Repair Café, 9.30 – 12.30pm, Wellspring Church Hall
- 2nd Felton repair café, 11.00 – 3.00pm, Gallery 45
- 3rd Dawn Chorus, 6-8am, Hauxley
- 3rd Bat Walk, 8.30 – 9.30pm, Cramlington
- 5th CAW Reading Session, 7-8.30pm, Morpeth
- 8th Green Gossip, 2.30 – 3.30pm, Warkworth
- 14th The Green Table in Berwick on Tweed, 11-12pm, Berwick Voluntary Centre.
- 16th Amble Repair Café, 2.30 – 4.30pm, Drywater Arts
- 24th National Emergency briefing film, 6pm Dry Water Arts Centre, Amble

14. Regular Meetings

- Climate Action Wansbeck meet on the third Tuesday of the month. Contact Climateactionwansbeck@gmail.com
- Climate Action Wansbeck Climate Reading Group. Morpeth Library - first Tuesday of the month
- Greener Amble Network next meets 20th May at Amble Youth Project, Dilston Terrace NE65 0DT from 6.30 for 7.00 – 8.45pm