



Annual Report 2025–26

Introduction

Northumberland Green Hub (NGH) was established in September 2023 to bring together individuals and community groups across north Northumberland who share a commitment to climate action, sustainability and environmental issues.

The aim is simple: to provide a network where people can connect, learn from one another, collaborate, share knowledge and resources, promote events and offer mutual support.

As we approach the end of our third year, NGH continues to develop as a network for and of people and organisations working for a greener Northumberland.

A Growing Network

One of the most encouraging developments over the past year has been the continued growth of our membership. We now have approximately **185 members**, representing an increase of around **20% over the last twelve months**.

This increase has been organic – we have not had the capacity to actively promote the network - and demonstrates that there is a real appetite for connection and collaboration around environmental issues. It also brings opportunities for NGH to help strengthen links between individuals and groups who may otherwise be working in isolation.

Our Activities During 2025–26

This year has been a somewhat challenging one in terms of capacity. As a result, we have concentrated on maintaining a baseline offering rather than developing what the network offers.

Despite this, we have continued to provide opportunities for members to meet, share ideas and learn from one another.

Three Community Events have been held during the year:

- **December 2025** – a social event providing an opportunity for members to meet informally, network and get to know one another.
- **March 2026 – Growing Together** – an event exploring a variety of nature-friendly spaces and sharing ideas and experience about how individuals and communities can support nature.
- **September 2026 – Communicating Differently** – exploring new and interactive approaches to communication, sharing ideas and developing skills.

Following our event on food in September 2025, we developed an **online Food Map**. The map provides a practical way of sharing information and is an example of how ideas raised through NGH events can develop into useful resources for the wider network.

The nine **Special Interest Groups** continue to provide a way for members to share information, publicise events and seek support. Groups are member-led and vary in the levels of activity. We have recently updated the **Guide to the NGH WhatsApp Community** to help people get the most from the groups.

The recent member survey confirmed how valuable the **Monthly Digest** is to members. **88%** of respondents rated the Digest as useful or very useful, while **80% said they would miss it if it stopped**.

At the same time, the survey responses identified ways in which the Digest could be improved, particularly through clearer navigation, a more visual layout and easier ways of finding information.

Member Survey

The survey mentioned above was carried out in June and July to gather members' views about NGH.

The response was overwhelmingly positive.

- **92%** of respondents said they would recommend NGH to others.
- **94%** said that membership helps them feel better connected and informed.
- **60%** had attended at least one Community Event during the previous year.
- **86%** found the events useful.
- **90%** rated the networking opportunities highly.
- **88%** rated the Monthly Digest useful or very useful.
- **80%** said they would miss the Digest if it stopped.

Members particularly valued the Community Events, the Monthly Digest, opportunities to network and the sense of being part of a wider community.

The survey also gave us valuable ideas about how NGH could develop. Suggested themes for future events included:

- Nature recovery
- Climate adaptation
- Water quality
- Greener buildings
- Campaigning
- Community organising

Members also expressed an interest in training and skills development, including fundraising, digital skills, social media, AI and grant applications.

Perhaps most importantly, there was a strong desire for NGH to continue bringing people together while facilitating opportunities for practical collaboration and shared learning.

Members suggested strengthening Special Interest Groups, reaching more communities across Northumberland, encouraging wider participation and supporting more member-led activity.

Capacity – Our Main Challenge

Capacity continues to be an issue. Changes within the Steering Group have meant that, for much of the year, there have been only **three active Steering Group members** at any given time. This has inevitably limited what the network has been able to deliver and has meant that the focus has largely been on maintaining core activities.

The challenge for the coming year is therefore to build the capacity needed to sustain and develop NGH as members have indicated they would like. We will need to encourage more members to get involved in supporting the network, whether through the Steering Group, Special Interest Groups, specific projects or individual activities.

Funding

Our funding from **Thriving Together** came to an end in March 2026, and a year-end report was successfully submitted. We are very grateful for the support and funding provided by Thriving Together, which has helped NGH to establish and develop its activities.

Because of uncertainties about capacity, a decision was made to not apply for further funding. The cost of running core NGH activities remains low, but, as we move forward consideration of the network's longer-term sustainability and capacity will remain important.

Looking Ahead

The member survey provides a strong foundation for planning NGH's next year.

Our priorities are to:

1. **Increase capacity** to run and manage the network.
2. **Develop a programme of four Community Events for 2027**, reflecting the interests and suggestions of members.
3. **Follow up on the findings of the member survey**, turning feedback into practical actions.
4. **Improve the Monthly Digest**, making it easier to navigate and more engaging and accessible.
5. **Work with members to increase the effectiveness of Special Interest Groups.**
6. **Create more opportunities for member-led activity, practical collaboration and shared learning.**
7. **Reach more communities across Northumberland** and encourage wider participation in the network.

Our ambition is not to become a large organisation for its own sake. Rather, it is to become a stronger and more effective network – one that helps local people and groups achieve more by working together.

Thank You

We would like to thank **Thriving Together** for their support and funding during the past year.

Above all, we would like to thank all NGH members. The work being undertaken across Northumberland – engaging with communities, identifying and delivering projects, protecting and restoring nature, improving our environment and supporting campaigns – takes commitment, drive and energy. We hope that coming together through Northumberland Green Hub is one way of giving and receiving support, learning from one another and sharing skills, knowledge and ideas.

The positive feedback from this year's survey shows that members value that connection. Our task now is to build on it and ensure that NGH continues to be a useful, welcoming and active network for the year ahead.

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to Northumberland Green Hub over the last twelve months.