

**Tees Valley Nature Partnership
Local Sites Group Meeting Notes – 25th June 2015**

<p>Present: Ian Bond (Hartlepool Council); Simon Blenkinsopp (Middlesbrough Council); Martin Allen (Independent Botanist); Fiona McGloin (Redcar & Cleveland Council); David Askey (Stockton Council); Jeremy Garside (TVWT); Phil Roxby (Darlington Council)</p> <p>Apologies: Graham Clingan (Stockton Council)</p>	
<p>Defra Indicator</p> <p><u>Hartlepool</u> The return remained the same as in 2013/14. One site, Phillips Tank Farm had dropped out of positive management; one site, Greatham North, was now in positive management due to the coastal realignment scheme instituted by the EA. It is anticipated that Greatham North would in time be designated as part of the SPA however it would still be classed as an LWS for its saltmarsh flora. The return was agreed.</p> <p><u>Darlington</u> At least two sites, Drinkfield and Broken Scar are likely to have required non-intervention management over the past five years. PR to formulate statements of non-intervention and circulate for comment/approval</p> <p>IB will re-circulate the template for non-intervention.</p> <p><u>Middlesbrough</u> The indicator is likely to be the same as last year. SB to circulate for comment/approval.</p> <p><u>R&C</u> Eight sites had last had recorded positive management in 2009 so had dropped out of the 2013/14 return. Of these JG noted that Eston Moor would be in a management scheme which would count as positive management.</p> <p>Four of the sites were woodlands. MA thought that some tree felling had occurred in Kilton Woods, which might qualify as positive management if it enhanced the interest feature.</p> <p>TVWT had done some management of grassland at Scaling Dam.</p> <p>IB had received an e-mail from Defra about information that Natural England holds on stewardship schemes, which would inform the indicator. IB to circulate</p> <p>FM to research potential positive management actions and circulate the return for comment/ approval</p>	<p>Action PR</p> <p>Action IB</p> <p>Action SB</p> <p>Action IB</p> <p>Action FM</p>

<p><u>Stockton</u> Stockton is proposing to report on 56 sites rather than 58 as previously, as two sites had been removed.</p> <p>Portrack Meadows has not had positive management for over 5 years.</p> <p>The management plan for Quarry Wood has not been implemented.</p> <p>The Stockton LWS that are road verges had positive management in 2010 so would still count for this year's return however there was no funding to repeat a cutting and baling in future years. DA asked whether flailing the road verges would count as positive management. It was agreed that this would be suitable where invasion by scrub was affecting the condition of an LWS.</p> <p>DA to calculate the return for 2014/15 and circulate for comment/ approval.</p>	<p>Action DA</p>
<p>Artificially created sites</p> <p>PR asked whether grassland sites that had been artificially created could be designated as LWS if they met the criteria. This was agreed in principle as several other types of LWS were the result of habitat creation. IB to draft some guidelines on the criteria for designation of habitat creation areas and circulate for comment. It was suggested that these include that the habitat was created for nature conservation and that it has supported the relevant feature for five years.</p>	<p>Action IB</p>
<p>Site re-surveys</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>GCN</u> <p>JG gave a detailed report on a series of GCN surveys that Rob Scaife had undertaken. Sixty ponds out of a total of 101 ponds with records of GCN had been looked at, mostly in the daytime. Of these 24 were in a poor condition and considered unlikely to still support GCN. Six ponds had definite records of GCN with a further 23 ponds supporting other amphibians and considered still suitable to support GCN.</p> <p>It is likely that many GCN sites will have been missed due to timing and the difficulties in finding them on a single survey.</p> <p>The surveys will be continued next year. The LSP will consider the results once all surveys are completed and consider any new sites or de-designations at that point.</p> <p>The surveys have identified wider implications for amphibian conservation which the LNP may wish to consider in the future.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PR had updated the Tees Valley LWS re-survey master sheet and had circulated it prior to the meeting. 	

<p>New sites</p> <p>The management group had agreed in principle the sites put forward by the Local Sites group last year but needed to see the information on the sites presented in a standardised form before they could be ratified. This should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A plan on an O/S map showing the boundaries and a grid ref; • The criteria that the site meets and how it meets them; • Date of assessment and name of assessor <p>In addition to the above sites, several sites had been identified for Water Vole but boundaries hadn't been determined. This needs to be clarified before the potential LWS can be ratified by the management group. Amy Carrick may be able to advise on the boundaries. IB to re-circulate the survey information.</p> <p>No other sites were being proposed at this time.</p> <p>Graham Megson had suggested that there was another potential site in R&C however no details were available at present so this was deferred until a future meeting.</p>	<p>Action IB</p>
<p>AOB</p> <p>The group discussed the designation process in terms of the respective roles of the Local Sites Partnership and Local Authorities. While the guidance states that it is the role of the LSP to select sites, JG pointed out that it was for LAs to decide whether to recognise that in their Local Plans however if they did not then the LNP had grounds to dispute the Local Plan.</p> <p>IB pointed out that in the Local Sites guidance it stated that "the partnership should set out the process it will follow in considering any observations received from site owners and how the partnership will respond." JG offered to draft a policy on how the LSP would do that and circulate for comment.</p> <p>MA asked if the management group had discussed the need to survey the Airport site for its potential LWS value. JG confirmed that this had been discussed and that INCA were conducting some surveys.</p>	<p>Action JG</p>
<p>Date of next meeting:</p> <p>TBA. Scheduled for January 2016</p>	