

TEES NATURE CONFERENCE 2019

Inspire, Connect and Celebrate

Nature Partnership Manager, **Rachel Murtagh**, tells us all about recent successes for Tees Valley Nature Partnership.

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Above: Tony Juniper CBE, the new Chair of Natural England.

THE CONFERENCE HAS GONE FROM STRENGTH TO STRENGTH each year and is fast establishing itself as the go-to event for those working towards a greener future, both locally and with growing national interest too.

This year, the Tees Valley Nature Partnership (TVNP) and Your Tees Catchment Partnership teamed up again to run the event; with Teesside University and MIMA (Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art) hosting the morning and afternoon sessions respectively. Over 120 people attended the day, which had a mixture of interesting presentations and workshops, plenty of opportunities for attendees to forge new links together and all rounded out with some extremely yummy local produce provided by Elizabeth's Kitchen!

Professor David Hill, Chair of the Environment Bank, was our keynote speaker for the morning. We were all in agreement that this inspiring and thought-provoking talk helped set the tone for a great day ahead. Everyone then had a choice of attending various workshops, which included a look at two exciting landscape partnership projects – River Tees Re-discovered, which is coming to an end (a summing up can be found on page 14 of this issue of Wild Tees) and Discover Bright Water, a new project that is just starting out.

Following this we had some punchy presentations introducing 2019 as 'The National Year of Green Action', kicked off by the Environment Agency and followed by our own Chief Executive Officer, Jeremy Garside, putting the spotlight on our recent acquisition of Lazenby Woods. TVNP Chair, Timothy Crawshaw gave us some inspiration from the Rhur Valley and, finally, to lead us into a creative afternoon, a poetic reading taking us from the river Dee to the river Tees – given by the Dee's artist in residence, Nicole Manley.

Over lunch the National Lottery Community Fund presented the Tees Valley Nature Partnership with a massive cheque for over £280,000, funding our efforts for the next three years (more of that in a later article). The day was rounded off with an afternoon of artists' talks, bursts of horticulture and clean air workshops.

Leading straight on from the conference to a drinks reception, we had the great delight of welcoming one of our countries most eminent environmentalists, Tony Juniper (now the Chair of Natural England), Daisy Cooper (local representative from the UK Student Climate Change Network) and Elinor Morgan (Senior Curator at MIMA) to launch MIMA's 'Fragile Earth' exhibition, which runs through to the 26th September - well worth a visit!

"The event was brilliantly organised, with some great content and we got a huge amount out of it. Thanks once again, I can't wait for the next one!"

Alan Liddle, Friends of Stainton and Thornton Green Spaces

If you'd like to know more about the conference or the work of TVNP, please visit our website at: teesvalleynaturepartnership.org.uk