



NATURAL ASSETS WORKING GROUP MINUTES
2pm 11/12/19
Tees Valley Wildlife Trust HQ

In attendance	Fiona Hurworth, Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council; Dave Askey, Stockton Borough Council; Martin Allen, independent ecologist; Mike Leakey, INCA; Rachel Murtagh, TVNP
Apologies	Jeremy Garside, Tees Valley Wildlife Trust
Chair	Graham Megson, Hartlepool Borough Council
Secretariat	Louise Richards, TVNP

Agenda Item NA/Item. Meeting.Year	Notes	Action
NA/01.04.19 Minutes and Matters arising	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 20 Tees Valley LWS lowland grassland sites of SSSI quality. 2. Discussion on biodiversity indicators. It is the role of the group to promote priority habitats & species, as well as designated LWSs. 3. The mapping of 'Unimproved grassland' on the NE 'Magic' website is incorrect. It includes semi-improved as well as unimproved grassland. 4. The perceived increased need for local authority ecologists recognised & discussed. Darlington BC has a budgeted vacant post & it is thought that DBC are in discussion with Middlesbrough BC and Stockton BC regarding a shared Ecology service. Discussion regarding draft letter to the TV Combined Auth & LPAs. NAWG to highlight to councils that 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Group will carry over action of sending list to NE and ERIC. MA to review, GM to draft letter. 2. Carry over developing a system of Tees Valley biodiversity indicators to next meeting. 3. For Info. 4. Letter drafted to send to TV Combined Authority + Planning Group (GM to amend). 5. GM to amend letter, to be sent out on TVNP stationery. 6. Terms of Reference standardised across the groups – review comments by ML and then publish. 7. For Info.

	<p>they have a duty to protect biodiversity under the NERC Act.</p> <p>Councils should have regard to the NERC Act in all of their service areas.</p> <p>Agreed that the TVCA will be on the circulation list for the LPA letter (NB: TVCA has no dedicated officer covering natural env.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Discussion regarding vulnerability of SSSI Hart Bog SSSI (Hartlepool). Nature Recovery Strategies (mooted in Environment Bill) should identify how this and similar sites could be safeguarded & better connected (e.g. a buffer of land could be bought and re-wilded. 6. MA discussed the benefits of using green hay transfer from existing SSSI quality grasslands to buffers & new sites to maintain the integrity of genetic material. This could be part of Biodiversity Net G. 7. The Environment Bill will be re-drafted by the new Government, following this week's Gen Election. 8. RMM said that TVNP Terms of Reference have been standardised across the sub-groups 9. Festival of Thrift 2019 – RMM reported that much had been learned from the event though TVNP engagement by the public was low & disappointing. Many people clearly went for a day out rather than for the environment messages. 	
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<p>NA/02.04.19 Biodiversity Net Gain</p>	<p>Outstanding LWS recommendations:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Billingham Beck Saltmarsh – North. 2. Billingham Beck Saltmarsh – South. Proposal recommended to go to Steering Group. Need to record the biodiversity that is there because it will change 3. Potential grassland site – Hardwick Dene west of Hardwick Dene Nature Reserve. MA surveyed one side of the beck, needs to investigate other side in 2020. 4. Hartburn Beck. Recommended boundary 3m around water course. Stockton BC owns one side, (not the North Bank). Agreed to amend boundary so all LWS in SBC ownership. 5. Grassland between A174 lanes, Greystones – is on ‘made ground’. JG not available to report on his discussions with the Company that manages Highways England road verges. 6. Central Park LWS deselection – awaiting more information from DBC. 7. Blackwell Grange Golf Course amendment - waiting for further information. <p>Discussion ensued proposing the addition of:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. St. Joseph’s Cemetery Grassland (M’boro) 9. South Bank Station Brownfield Grassland (Redcar & Cleveland). 10. SDL 160 00 reporting – LAs due to submit data to Government Nov) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Billingham Beck Saltmarsh North requires access permission & survey in 2020. 2. GM will amend text & map of Billingham Beck Saltmarsh South in time for next week’s TVNP steering group mtg. 3. Hardwick Dene – further survey in 2020 4. Hartburn Beck, GM to amend in time for next week’s TVNP steering group mtg. 5. A174 Greystones grassland – further survey in 2020. 6. Central park – GM to contact former DBC Ecologist Phil Roxby to seek information. 7. No further progress possible while DBC Ecologist post is vacant. 8. Further survey effort needed 2020 (MA). 9. Further survey effort needed 2020 (MA). 10. HBC, R&CBC and SBC submitted data. 11. Master list of LWS to be updated (carry over to 2020).
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	<p>11. RMM displayed the spreadsheet of the full complement of Tees Valley LWSs. It was noted that this has not been updated for since 2010.</p>	
<p>NA/03.03.19 Biodiversity Net Gain</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Discussion: If Biodiversity issues are delayed nationally could we implement strategies & projects locally (e.g. Bio Opportunity Mapping, biodiversity off-setting & Biodiversity Net Gain)? 2. Discussion: CPD training is in the TVNP Business Plan and is earmarked for Local Planning Authority planning officers – needed due to on-going changes in biodiversity requirements in national planning. We need to ask: how would you like us to deliver training? We could use case studies to work through in sessions. NB: Jim Ferguson the Head of Planning at HBC, is the Chair of the Tees Valley Planning Officers group for 2020. 3. Could also look at strategic plans as part of CPD training. 4. Both training and a two-way discussion would be mutually beneficial. 5. Discussion about offsetting across the Tees Valley rather than on a borough by borough basis. 6. Agreed that we will focus on planning officer rather than consultant ecologists. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. No action. 2. GM to draft a paragraph on the CPD training offer.
<p>NA/04.04.19 Darlington BC Local Plan Assessment (Duty to Cooperate)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Assessment & scoring of DBC local Plan submission. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. RMM will go through the Darlington Doc, will draft letter of co-operation & circulate. GM to also check the submission.

<p>NA/05.04.19 Natural England project developing local Natural Capital Atlas</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Tees catchment data set – circulated with agenda, for information 2. TV Natural Capital Assets account. The TV Combined Authority has asked TVNP to create a natural capital account as a pilot for other combined authorities, funded by Natural England. Focus on Jobs and growth. Will send out draft 15th Jan. 3. How can this be applied? How do we apply this data? 4. We should have a list of projects that we can apply when available. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. For info. 2. ACTION needed.
<p>NA/05.03.19 AOB</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The letter TVNP is to send to ERIC, stating that the Tees and Durham Valley Airport Grassland site meets LWS criteria, needs to be shared with TVCA as they own the airport. The letter will inform ERIC that under the LWS process, this site has not been designated as a LWS by SBC (on economic grounds). 2. Darlington BC, Ecologist post is still vacant. 3. We are Losing Local Wildlife Sites through lack of funding to manage them + absence of a monitoring programme. 4. TVNP update from RM 5. ‘District licensing’ which covers Great crested newts is intended to eventually cover all protected species (bats will be challenging). 6. We need to identify where the opportunities are and then we can roll these out to the specific bodies. Link up mapping and strategic projects groups. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The NAWG proposed one question to be put to the TVNP steering group. During the passage of a TVNP steering group approved LWS through the approved LWS process, what happens when the Local Authority formally writes to say they will not designate the LWS, but do not provide a scientific reason, but instead, give an economic reason? NB: The LWS can only be judged on its scientific merit, but the designation is in the gift of the LA.
<p>2020 Meeting dates:</p>	<p>11th March; 10th June; 9th September; 9th December 2020. All meetings: 2pm TVWT meeting room, Margrove Park Heritage Centre.</p>	

