



NATURAL ASSETS WORKING GROUP MINUTES

2pm 11/03/2020

Tees Valley Wildlife Trust HQ

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

Agenda Item	Notes	Action
NA/01.01.20	<p>Minutes and Matters arising. Review of the last meeting notes: address outstanding items.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The list of 20 Tees Valley LWS's which include areas of Priority habitat lowland grassland, not yet sent to NE & ERIC. GM queried old survey dates - MA replied that NE's own data is often older! ERIC already have the LWS info, but group agreed that it is important to also flag up the grasslands. Q of whether LWS's should be the only biodiversity indicator for the TVNP. They are the only one Gov't asks for (Single Data List 160 00). What other indicators could be used? Agree that this is a future piece of work as Natural Capital Accounting, etc, evolves. Terms of Reference amends from ML agreed & added to by GM, e.g. wording changed to represent what the SDL 160 00 asks for. Role of the group added. FH updated on Darlington BC Local Plan - Planning section to consult on the next stage of their Local Plan in April 2020. This stage is the one before it is submitted to the Secretary of State, and where consultation relates to tests of soundness and legal compliance. MA reported that he is in correspondence with Stockton BC to ask why they rejected the Airport LWS ('economic grounds' should not be used). MA has asked for documentation backing up decision. The legal ownership of the airport complicates matters. Next step might be to go to the MP or local government ombudsmen. 	<p>LR to correct grammatical error on page 4 of last meeting's minutes.</p> <p>GM to draft letter to ERIC (Minute 1) to be sent by TVNP.</p> <p>GM to send LR a clean copy of the TOR (Minute 3).</p>

<p>NA/02.01.20</p>	<p>New Local Wildlife Sites, site amendments and potential sites:</p> <p>Query on copyright infringement if we use Google maps. Agreed to use MAGIC maps instead. Responsibility for copyrighted maps lies with LA at adoption.</p> <p>De-selection guidelines See: https://teesvalleynaturepartnership.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/TV-Guidance-on-de-selecting-sites.pdf</p> <p>For invertebrate sites, the guidelines say that de-selection of sites should take place in the following circumstances: D3. Where there has been no evidence of the species for which the site was designated for a period of at least 5 years and there is no realistic prospect of it being restored within 5 years. (See Note 2). Note 2 says: Where the species for which the site is designated are believed to have completely disappeared de-selection should not occur until a formal survey at an appropriate level of detail has occurred to confirm this.</p> <p>1. Outstanding LWS recommendations:</p> <p>1. <i>St Joseph's Cemetery Grassland</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ North of Pallister Park, Middlesbrough BC. An old cemetery with semi-improved neutral grassland over 100 years old. Cemeteries team keen to change management. NE area of Cemetery excluded as former allotments and grassland is poorer. NB: Churchyards & Cemeteries is a TVNP LBAP habitat. ▪ Meets the criteria under Neutral grassland flora (3 grass sp. & 5 herb sp.) having 5 grass sp. & 9 herb sp. Site agreed. <p>2. <i>South Bank Station Black Path Grassland</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Noted that whole railway corridor is good. This section has community value and Borderlands Community Project engagement will be a positive. ▪ Meets the criteria under Urban grassland flora (10 sp.) having 15 sp. Site agreed, however, ownership not known, so pending. <p>3. <i>Billingham Beck Saltmarsh North</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The site is owned by Lucite. Risk Assessment needed for access due to cyanide. Re-survey 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. GM to prepare top copy qualifying site (using MAGIC map for locations): St. Joseph's Cemetery Grassland. 2. JG to propose site to forthcoming TVNP Steering Grp meeting. 3. FH To ask R&CBC Rights of Way team who owns the South Bank Station Black Path Grassland land. 4. ML to seek access permission for survey of Billingham Beck Saltmarsh North site. INCA to lead on survey, with MA assisting if appropriate. 5. DA and MA to survey Aislaby Grange A67 road verge Grassland in spring/summer. DA to check whether SBC Highways mow the verge. GM to write up site details to be sent to SBC as a potential LWS. 6. DA & MA to survey Hardwick Dene Grassland in 2020 & submit results in due course. 7. JG to continue liaison with McAlpine re: management of Greystones A19 central reservation Grassland. GM/MA to survey in 2020. 8. Stainton Way Grassland – MA to survey in 2020. 9. Brass Castle Lane Grassland – MA to survey in 2020. 10. A19/A67 Yarm Grassland – damage currently being mitigated. MA is Ecological Clerk of Works.
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needed 2020. ML to seek access permission via Ian Bond (INCA) & MA to assist with survey. Site pended.

4. Aislaby Grange A67 road verge Grassland

- Road verge on south side of A67 west of Uraly Nook. Under Neutral grassland flora (3 grass sp. & 5 herb sp.) this site has 2 grass sp. & 10 herb sp. Surveyor (MA) considers further grass sp. are suppressed by frequent mowing. For scientific robustness, third grass sp. needs to be recorded before this group can agree its status as a LWS. Thought that mowing may be by adjacent Garden Centre. The site meets the size criteria as it is >100m in length. Pended awaiting 2020 survey results. Agreed that site would be written up and sent to SBC as a potential site, so that it is on their radar. Site pended.

5. Hardwick Dene Grassland

- This site is west of Hardwick Dene nature reserve. MA surveyed an area of relatively poor grassland in 2019 & has identified further areas to survey in 2020. JG visited years ago and saw evidence of dumping of overburden/ debris in some parts of the field, suggesting grassland will be poor quality. MA to survey in 2020. Site pended.

6. Greystones A174 central reservation Grassland

- GM undertook an initial visit in 2019. JG met with McAlpine contractors who work for the Highways Agency & are keen to implement positive biodiversity management (which has won them plaudits on sections of the A19). JG to continue to liaise with McAlpine. GM/MA to undertake further survey in 2020. Site pended.

7. Central Park LWS - deselection

- Site is in DBC. Qualifying feature was dingy skipper, now likely to be extinct, but needs evidence (see above) – a formal re-survey is required. Issue pended until DBC Ecologist appointed.

8. Blackwell Grange Golf Course

- Site is in DBC. Site has been on the list for over a year with a note that an amendment is needed,

	<p>however, no further information is provided. Issue pended until DBC Ecologist appointed.</p> <p><i>9. Stainton Way Grassland</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In MBC. Further survey needed in 2020. <p><i>10. Brass Castle Lane Grassland</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In MBC. Further survey needed in 2020. Various sections of verge along the lane appear to be of interest. <p><i>11. LWS damage: A19/ A67 Yarm Road Grassland</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In SBC. Site being damaged due to essential roadworks. The site has been affected previously. Turf strip requires an overnight road closure. Half of the stripped turf will go to Preston Park and be re-laid; the other half will be stored on-site and eventually re-laid on-site & watered/ re-seeded with native provenance material. MA is the Ecological Clerk of Works. <p>2. Spreadsheet containing details of de-designated LWSs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No further amendments reported. Keep on agenda as standing item as info is useful. 	
<p>NA/03.01.20</p>	<p>Work with Tees Valley LA Planning Managers</p> <p>Briefing Paper for Planning Managers meeting on 10-03-20 was circulated to NAWG. RM, Eddie Halstead from EA & GM involved. Aim is the provision of CPD for planners around forthcoming legislative and policy changes to biodiversity. RM delivered the Paper to Planning Managers.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Environment Bill (on its second reading) - several key changes in biodiversity expected. 2. At least 10% biodiversity net gain (BNG) likely for major planning applications – without LA ecologists this could be difficult to manage. 3. New methods of working should be proactive as well as reactive. 4. RM & LR to attend a DEFRA conference on biodiversity. 	<p>For information. RM to report to full Steering Group 18-03-20. Propose TVNP host a workshop with Planning Managers and others to facilitate a joint Tees Valley agreement and approach.</p>

NA/04.01.20	<p>Natural England project developing local Natural Capital Account & Atlas</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Natural England have given TVNP the funding for the trial due to the TV Having a combined authority (TVCA). 2. The assessment does not account for every ecosystem service, e.g. it does not include all health and wellbeing impacts. 3. Draft report has been checked by RM, GM & Eddie Halstead (EA). 4. Carbon budget showed a net loss due to agricultural land use. TVCA were probably expecting the natural env to offset losses from economic activities. Leisure use of the natural environment is a high scoring factor. 5. The account will be launched at the conference on 19/06/2020 at Teesside University. 6. Natural Capital Atlas <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Account will provide Tees Valley wide data that the TVNP can report on annually. 	
NA/05.01.20	<p>AOB:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Thanks to out-going Chair <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GM standing down as Chair. Thanks were expressed to GM. 2. Incoming Chair <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JG to stand in as interim Chair. 3. TVNP update <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MA went to a Suffolk WT road verge conference & has shared a web link. • TVWT has taken ownership of Gravel Hole Quarry (in SBC) next to the existing nature reserve. The site covers 7 Ha. 4. JG reported that it is possible to export GIS shape files from Magic Map. 5. MA reported that Spencer Beck greenspace (R&CBC) is a good example of re-wilding. JG noted the presence of a small population of water voles on this site. 	
Next meeting	2pm, 10 th June 2020 at Tees Valley Wildlife Trust offices, Margrove Park.	