

Tees Nature Panel 2020 Q&A's

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And the questions we didn't manage to answer live...

1. Is increasing access to nature good for wildlife?

A – Answered in live panel by Mike Leakey. In summary nature and access can co-exist with good management and planning. It is important to encourage access to nature as this build's appreciation and the motivation for protection.

2. There is likely to be a huge demand for mental health services as CV carries on, how could that be addressed?

A – We need to continue to promote to decisions makers and the wider public the importance of green space to our mental health using evidence such as these [national statistics](#). One of the outputs from the conference was a [letter addressed to the Tees Valley Mayor](#).

3. Is the rewilding approach - more in the style shown on the Knepp Estate - part of the proposed strategy for nature recovery in the North?

A – We speak for the Tees Valley part of the region but collaborate with our neighbours* There are 'local' ambitions emerging e.g. [Discover Brightwater](#) and we'll be looking at opportunities through the planning and delivery of the new Nature Recovery Strategies that are being introduced in the forthcoming [Environment Bill](#) *Northern Upland Chain LNP and the North East England Nature Partnership who cover the rest of northeast region.

4. Two parts. Particularly interested in what the 30-year (2050) risk profile of the Tees Valley is re predicted climate change. What will the main Tees Valley specific impacts be?

A – A simple picture of flood risk including for the Tees Valley is available [here](#) and a more detailed information is available [here](#). Using the latest science from the Met Office and around the world, the [UK Climate Projections 2018](#) illustrate a range of future climate scenarios until 2100 – showing increasing summer temperatures, more extreme weather and rising sea levels are all on the horizon. UKCP18 has been developed by the Met Office Hadley Centre, in partnership with Defra, BEIS, the Devolved Administrations and the Environment Agency, and has been extensively peer-reviewed by an independent science panel. We expect this to cause increased risks from surface water flooding, river flooding as shown on the maps but perhaps the clearest risk we can see is the risk caused by sea-level rise for tidal flooding for places on the coast and tidal estuary and that is the focus of our investment plan in the next 10 years to ensure resilience until 2100.

5. Given the GHG mitigation actions planned for the Tees Valley. Are their major opportunities for Nature that can be built into them?

A – The focus the TVCA has on carbon reduction and clean growth in its economic plans is really welcome. This presents a great opportunity for the Tees Valley to be a place where nature can play a role in GHG mitigation plans. We expect the natural capital accounting approach when it becomes available will be the start of the evidence base to help us understand the potential for nature-based solutions but that there will be more work to do but it is a really exciting area TVNP and member organisations such as EA want to support.

6. Is the strategic focus, both nationally and locally, shifting from the conservation of a few charismatic species, to the cultivation of biodiversity as a whole?

A – We still have priority species and habitats that are protected under law. However, there has been a move to a ‘whole landscape’ level approach, since *Making Space for Nature: A review of England’s Wildlife Sites and Ecological Network’ (the Lawton Report)* was submitted to the government in 2010. It concluded ‘isolated nature reserves across England are not sufficient to maintain ecological connectivity because species are unable to move, or adapt quickly enough, in landscapes fragmented by development and intensive agriculture. To reverse the effects Lawton called for ‘More, Bigger, better, and joined up’ nature. The new Nature Recovery Strategies that are being introduced in the forthcoming [Environment Bill](#).

7. When is it predicted that sea rise will 'drown' the salt marsh?

A – Climate change caused by greenhouses gases from human activity is happening now, the evidence is compelling, and no serious scientist denies it. It is causing sea-level rise around the world including in the Tees Valley. This sea-level rise is putting pressure on inter-tidal and water-dependent habitats in the Tees Valley now (sometimes called coastal squeeze), as well as increasing the flood risk to people and businesses. However, in the mix are also other pressures caused by climate change such as temperature change, acidification and more violent weather that will compound sea level rise. Globally in the 2020s, we expect to lose 1200ha of internally designated intertidal habitat worldwide. You can read more in the Environment Agency’s [report on Climate change impacts and adaptation](#).

8. What are the prospects of financial landowner incentives being moved away from an agricultural focus and toward managing land for nature post Brexit?

A – Defra have set out, most recently in their Policy Discussion Document from February 2020, their intention to redesign agricultural policies to meet environmental ambitions while supporting the farming sector. The proposed ELM scheme is founded on the principle of “public goods for public money” and is due to be launched in 2024 and to be piloted from next year. The Basic Payment Scheme will be phased out with payment reductions beginning next year with monies being repurposed for public goods, better animal and plant health and animal welfare and improved productivity. ELMs is likely to pay for Public goods such as improvements to biodiversity, heritage, air and water quality and climate change mitigation and will be applied through local and landscape scales to enshrine Nature Recovery Networks. Eligibility for ELM may be broader than farmed land, as public benefits can be delivered from a wide range of land types. As a partnership, we are keen to work closely with landowners especially through bodies such as the NFU and CLA to support this approach. For further information [click here](#).

9. How can we include Net Gain & Natural Capital into our planning policies?

A – We are working closely as a partnership with the Planning Managers of our 5 local authorities to come up with a common and shared approach across the whole area. We are planning a training event with Planning Officers this coming autumn too.

10. Eddie, all sounds very positive, what are the challenges you are facing?

You can find out more information in this [Environment Agency video](#).

11. By buying into the natural products do you mean large corporates etc using the salt marsh to offset their carbon footprint?

A – Yes, the net gain process proposed in the Environment Bill is very welcome. It presents a great opportunity for transparency and certainty for everyone in the development processes. Organisations doing habitat enhancement projects will be presented with a new potential source of investment from the development process. The 25yr plan aims to broaden net biodiversity gain to wider net environmental gain. This opens up the potential for more ecosystems services that habitat also provides such as carbon sequestration to be of value to investors. This also doesn't have to be developers but could be other businesses or places looking to offset their environmental impact as part of their corporate social responsibility. Potentially also relevant here is the forthcoming consultation/ call for project exercise for to support the Biodiversity Credits Scheme for net gain – this is due to be launched on 13 July and will run to 28 August. The intention is to take a selection of habitat provision projects (new/enhancement) through the steps required to become 'investment ready' for day 1 of mandatory net gain.

12. Projects all sound great, but pictures are overwhelmingly white, how can we get ethnic minorities involved?

A – Answered in live panel (e.g. creative approaches such as the new Arts Council funded Borderlands project headed up by Teesside University/MIMA).

13. I'd like to ask Sue how we can reach people who don't fit the typical volunteer profile (e.g. maybe some of those people who litter drop and don't litter pick!!)

A – At the Wildlife Trust we spend a lot of time reaching out and using different ways to engage people of all ages and backgrounds to care about wildlife. Getting people to notice and enjoy and taking them on a journey, so that they feel responsibility, pride and ownership for their local environment is the main aim. The way you do that is different for different groups. One thing that doesn't work is preaching. We try to work through fun and enjoyment and providing constructive projects where people can see that they have made a difference. In the work that I have done with community and friends groups in the Tees Valley, when there is a local community group volunteering and looking after a green space, other site users are more likely to treat the site with respect. Also, when a site is rundown or has litter and graffiti, it attracts more so it's about keeping a site looking good.

I don't think there is a typical volunteer profile, received wisdom is that it is older and more affluent people who volunteer, I have found it to be much more diverse. There is a trend now for "micro-volunteering" whereby people can take part in short one-off volunteering activities, these are good at attracting a wider range of people, as its often the commitment that put them off. Also making sure that people have a good social experience by volunteering and having many different types of roles. Litter is a big problem; we seem to have half the population throwing it and yet there is a growing army of people picking it up. In the past, I have used theatre groups, competitions, and all sorts of upbeat campaigns. Some have been more successful than others. It is difficult to change people's behaviour. No simple solutions I am afraid!

14. Where can I get these booklets... look amazing... P.s. I'm the rural Crime Prevention Officer for Cleveland police.

A – Sue...Being published and launched late Sumer/early Autumn (COVID-19 permitting). Ordering information will be sent to TVNP member organisations and everyone attending the conference.

15. With schools struggling to fit students in due to social distancing, can we use the outdoor space we have?

A – Outdoor spaces can certainly be used for teaching and learning. Local green spaces if a school has access to them can be used for delivering lots of different parts of the curriculum with social distancing in place. Some schools have school grounds they could be used also but many have not been developed or designed for uses except for PR. Another difficulty is that many teachers lack the confidence and skills to deliver this. The Trust offers a range of support options for schools including school grounds design, Forest Schools and CPD for teachers.

16. How much more space natural space would we need in Teesside to sequester as much carbon as the NetZero Project?

A – The priority should be to reduce carbon emissions but where this can't be done, or at least not yet, offsetting can play a role. We need to do more work to understand the true sequestration opportunities in the Tees Valley. An exceptionally large amount of land would likely be needed to provide the equivalent capacity of CCUS. But the two can be complimentary as part of an overall Tees Valley 'offer' and habitat that can sequester carbon will also provide other, wider benefits to people and nature at the same time.

17. Not a question but opportunity to say I work in Tourism and Promotion at the North York Moors National Park. I'd love to reach out and build relationships to help promote more wildlife opportunities.

A – Great to hear! We'll get in touch with you directly to discuss further.

18. What do the panel think of the possible new GCSE about Nature?

A – A GCSE in Natural History would be an excellent way of addressing a gap in the current education offer and encouraging a connection to nature. However, whether there would be enough demand for it, or teachers have the required knowledge and skills to deliver it are questionable without lots of support. The Tees Valley Wildlife Trust have recently contributed to a [national consultation](#) about what a GCSE in Natural History might look like. TVWT are interested, too, in the practicalities and the importance of observing nature in real situations outside the classroom. The consultation launched on the 4 June 2020 and the closing date was midnight – 19 July 2020

19. We have a new police engagement team now who would love to join in with this type of thing.

A – Great to hear! We'll get in touch with you directly to discuss further.

Thanks to:

Eddie Halstead, Tees Programme Manager, Environment Agency

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