

NORTHUMBERLAND

Northumberland County Council

LOVE Northumberland Awards 2016



BANKS Group
development with care

 **Marmax Products Ltd**
recycled plastic products

Introduction

We are pleased to share with you this brochure which captures the success of the LOVE Northumberland Awards 2016, celebrating the very best in community and voluntary environmental work across the county.

This year was the sixth time we have held this event, in the beautiful setting of The Alnwick Garden, and we were privileged to have Her Grace the Duchess of Northumberland there to present the awards.

Representatives of a number of first class entries attended the uplifting event which was supported by main sponsor the Banks Group and hosted by TV presenter Carol Malia.

The awards were developed by Northumberland County Council through its LOVE Northumberland campaign, with the aim of promoting the work of the council and its many partner organisations, community groups and volunteers who all work towards preserving and enhancing the environment in the county.

Groups, organisations or individuals were honoured with winner, runner-up or highly commended awards at the event, across six categories, two schools also received awards in the Northumberland Schools Waste Category and one received an award in the Schools Sustainable Travel Project.

Main sponsor of the awards again this year was The Banks Group and development relations co-ordinator Jeannie Kielty said: "The spirit of the LOVE Northumberland Awards matches our own commitment to improving the communities in which we operate, and we're extremely pleased to be supporting Northumberland County Council in recognising the contributions made by local people in enhancing their county's environment in the last 12 months."

Councillor Alan Sambrook, Civic Head of Northumberland County Council, welcomed everyone to the awards evening and said " There has been huge competition this year and you have all done brilliantly with your chosen projects. I am overwhelmed by the dedication, passion and commitment of the many local groups, organisations and individuals that have made a real difference in their communities across the county. I am also extremely impressed by the schools and youth groups who we have seen – it's great to see so many young people showing such pride in where they live.

Our winning entries received a £250 prize, and runners-up £100, with the money going towards their project or other work within the local community. Each highly commended finalist also received a small cash prize of £50.

Marmax Products Ltd once again supported the schools recycling points challenge presenting a buddy bench to the winning school and a picnic bench to the runner up – both made from recycled plastic milk bottles. They also both received an engraved trophy. In conjunction with the Go Smarter to School Scheme, the Winner of the School Sustainable Travel Award was given a scooterpod supplied by Cyclepods Ltd.

The Outstanding Individuals all received engraved crystal clocks and National Garden vouchers.

We hope you enjoy reading about our marvellous winning projects, and that the photographs give you the opportunity to reflect on the success of the awards evening

The LOVE Northumberland

School Waste Category

Rewarding achievements in school recycling and waste minimisation
Nominations were invited from Northumberland schools for projects
that reinforce the Northumberland County Council recycling
and waste reduction messages and that benefit the wider environment
and local community.



Winner - School Waste Category

Newsham Primary School



Newsham Primary School have a Junior Leadership Team (JLT) with a representative from every class from years 2 to 6 in the school.

Recycling in school was a very popular suggestion as an area for improvement and something that the JLT were very passionate about so they set up a very effective recycling in school programme. As part of the education aspect of their scheme, the JLT came up with posters and leaflets to give out to each class so it was clear what could and couldn't be recycled.

They are currently creating some Early Years materials so that they can reinforce their message with the youngest children.

Recently the School took part in the launch of the Love Northumberland, Hate Litter Campaign and went out into their community and tidied up a messy area which members of the Residents Association had previously raised concerns about. The School intend to make litter reduction a huge part of their scheme going forward and plan to set up a mentoring scheme to engage and educate as many people in the local community as possible.

The success of recycling in school has led to other initiatives being developed to tackle other areas of waste. They have compost bins and fruit and vegetable waste is now being recycled to help them grow their own fruit and vegetables to be used in school. As well as this, they have held several clothing drives in an effort to get the school community to recycle unwanted clothing items.

The JLT's recycling system has worked so well that they now have plans to implement it in other schools in Blyth in the future.



Runner-Up - School Waste Category

Grange View C of E First School



The school council team have been encouraging recycling throughout the school by educating children and staff to use the correct bins in each classroom.

The children learnt about recycling in an assembly from the council and were then inspired to go home and tell their families about it.

Recycling at home tally charts and other information was sent home to encourage families to count what they recycled over a week- The families recycled 301 plastic bottles, 392 food and drinks cans and 670 bits of paper and cardboard.

They discovered that as a school, from the plastic bottles they recycled in one week, they saved enough energy to power a light bulb for 180 hours or a television for 135 hours.



School Sustainable Travel Award

The School Sustainable Travel Award is being awarded by Go Smarter Northumberland to a school that has gone the extra mile to promote sustainable transport for the journey to school. Every day, during the school term millions of journeys to school are made by car, this has a huge impact on the amount of traffic in our towns.

Go Smarter Northumberland works with schools across the county to support sustainable travel and encourage more parents and pupils to leave the car at home. This has many benefits: for the environment, road safety and our children's health.



School Sustainable Travel Award

Mickley First School



Prize of a Scooterpod supplied by Cyclepods Ltd.



Mickley First School achieved their Modeshift Stars bronze award last year and have worked exceptionally hard this year towards this years award.

All classes take part in Walk on Wednesdays and the school has taken part in Bike Week and Walk to School Week, this year holding a 'wacky shoe parade' and a design the 'wackiest shoe' competition.

They have installed cycle and scooter racks so the children have a safe place to leave their bikes and the school is working closely with the local Police on a project to develop understanding of safe travel and ensure that the importance of walking to school is recognised throughout the year.

The children have also helped support a campaign to reduce the speed outside their school to 20 mph and are currently working on posters and writing to the council to try and get a crossing installed in the village.

The children also got involved by encouraging parents to park safely when the school took part in the Northumberland 'Smarter Parker' campaign. They held whole school assemblies to promote smarter parking and the children took leaflets and car stickers home so that they could pass on the message about responsible parking to their parents and carers.

Staff also get involved by making sure, where possible schools visits are on foot and staff also try to car share when they can,



Best Children's Project



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Winner

Mickley First School - Community Life



For at least three years Mickley school children have completed a litter pick in the village. Working alongside Cherryburn National Trust, they secured funding from Newcastle University Students for the donation of a lavender plant to residents in the village to support their bee project - aware that food sources were low in the local area. They gave away 360 plants.

They have planted a wildflower border next to a local housing development and the children also designed and planted a small flower bed in the heart of the village.

They have been both winner and runner-up in the Prudhoe In Bloom for Schools Section.

They invite villagers to the school fayre and have established a fete section with a view to making the fayre less about school and more about community. They attend and support many local events with the school choir, including Stocksfield Festival and Beefest.

They supported the Tour of Britain by knitting bunting for the Tour which was then made into 2 blankets and sold to raise funds for Oxfam. This made an impact on all pupils in terms of enjoying sport.

Such activities focus on developing a wider awareness of their community beyond school, and encourage the children to make a positive contribution to the experiences of other people.



Runner-Up

Tweedmouth West First School



The School's aim of developing outdoor learning was based on the belief that children thrive outdoors when they can engage in meaningful experiences where they naturally explore, ask questions, solve problems and develop self-esteem and teamwork.

They took an empty school field and began the process of growing a forest school. They have planted saplings and a Hawthorn hedge, planted fruit trees and have constructed a 'village area with fire pit, log seating and grasshuts.



Instead of a mere playing field they now have a patch of rough meadow where wild flowers grow. Year 2 designed a pond which is full of frogs and other pond life and the children have constructed bird boxes and bug hotels.

Each class spends a day per week outdoors learning most curriculum areas and each class has a raised bed for growing fruit and vegetables which when harvested are cooked on the camp fire. This encourages children to try new foods and develop healthy eating habits.



In addition to gardening as part of the curriculum, the school has a thriving after school gardening club which is supported by parents and grandparents, forming a valuable community link.



Tweedmouth West has won the Best Schools Horticultural Project gold award from Britain in Bloom for five consecutive years as well as being awarded the Learning Outside the Classroom silver award for this project.



Best Young People's Project



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Winner

Leading Link—Plessey Woods Art Trail



Following completion of a temporary art installation in Saltwell Park in December 2014, these young people wanted to do a permanent installation in their own local country park at Plessey Woods.

They created a whole mile walk with 10 art installations to encourage families to venture into the woods and explore.

All of their creative ideas came from their imagination whilst visiting the woods but they were also very mindful of the beautiful environment and wildlife, working closely with professional artists, tree surgeons and the management at the Country Park. Their installations were made mostly using natural resources and had limited interference with the natural habitat.

In addition to the installations they hand-carved a series of wooden animals to hide in the trees to encourage visitors to look around them constantly around the walk and observe the great outdoors at Plessey. Wooden carved owls with a pointed left wing serve as directions along the trail.

These young people are extremely proud to have created a contemporary legacy for generations to come in an area of outstanding beauty.

They have always been active within their local community also getting involved with Bedlington in Bloom, litter picking, renovating Atlee Park bandstand and creating a community garden and orchard.



Best Urban Project



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Winner

Josephine Butler Primary Campus—Gardening & Wildlife Group



This group is made up of children from across the school and has been supported by the community through generous donations of equipment, soil and resources in order to allow it to continue.



There was an abandoned pond area in the grounds of one of the campuses and the children volunteered to stay behind after school as well as completing afternoon sessions in order to reclaim and develop the area.



The children cleared the area, laid flagstones, created bug hotels and built hedgehog houses to attract nature back there. It is now a tranquil place for reflection.



The children added a compost bin and regularly add composting materials. They are currently working on decking around the pond area.



To raise funds for the group they potted plants and created items to be sold at the School's Easter Fayre.

As well as this the group have used reclaimed tyres and raised beds to plant vegetables and fruit.

They have built a chicken coop and are now the proud owners of chickens who they are responsible for and take care of.



Runner-Up

Blyth Croftway School - Gardening Club



The Gardening Club has been set up by the school's Head Teacher at the request of some pupils with the main aim of teaching the children valuable life skills and improving their knowledge about plants and nature. It also aims to increase the children's love for the environment and local neighbourhood. It promotes community engagement, responsibility and ownership.



Year 3 children and two teaching staff volunteer once a week during term time. The children work hard to maintain the two bedding areas they adopted in Ridley Park and are showing commitment and enthusiasm. They have made bird and bee boxes which were placed along the park.

They also took part in the BBC Nature Watch Programme by counting the variety of birds in the park. The school feels that it has been a nice and effective way to educate the children in biology.



The skills they gain are long term and transferrable to other peers, members of their family and the wider community.

With the Tall Ships coming to Blyth this summer the children hope that all their efforts will be looked at and appreciated by all the visitors the event will attract.



Best Coast & Countryside Project



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Winner

Epiacum Heritage Ltd - Stories in the Landscape



The work of this group is completely focussed on promoting, developing and celebrating a unique Northumberland landscape which has the Epiacum Roman Fort at its heart. The farm (Castle Nook) was studied in depth by English Heritage in 2009 as part of their “Farmer – Miner Landscape Project” and remarkably, evidence of 3000 years of human habitation was found there. It was, until seven years ago, largely unknown, even by local people and was simply part of the agricultural landscape as a Scheduled Ancient Monument. The main plans of the group are therefore to conserve and protect it, whilst improving access and understanding of this “hidden gem”.



Volunteers are key to all aspects of the work. They have a “Friends Association” with around 65 members and a cohort of keen volunteers. Most recently the volunteers have developed a trail leaflet, installed gates and stiles, prepared a way-marked trail and landscaped the car park area. Their aim in the future is to create full visitor facilities on site converting a derelict bastle into a Visitor Centre.



All members of the community have been involved as the project facilitates “lifelong learning” opportunities, they have engaged with a wide range of ages and these include school visits, university students, University of the 3rd Age, special interest groups and the general public.



This project has attracted much media attention including: local and national press, The One Show, national radio coverage of the Today programme and most recently they appeared with Robson Green in “Further Tales from Northumberland”.



Runner-Up

Friends of Alnmouth Station - Birds, Bees & Bilton Boxes



This is a team of at least 10 volunteers who come from different communities including Newton-on-the-Moor, Alnwick, Amble, Rennington, Alnmouth and Hipsburn. They have linked up with the local community group in Lesbury and Hipsburn 1st School.



The children from the First School have provided artwork which has been installed on the railings of the Southbound platform, with the help and advice of local artist Francesca Simpson.



Over the past six years the “Friends” have built over 40 wooden containers for year round displays on both platforms and installed bird boxes. The plants provide food for insects. The first bird box has already been occupied. The containers are planted to provide interest in all seasons by using annual flowers, perennial herbs, grasses and spring bulbs. Regular dead-heading and watering ensure that the displays remain attractive.



The major regular work on a weekly rota is the watering but the group is also clearing and planting the areas around the car parks, including litter-picking, weeding and sweeping on a regular basis.

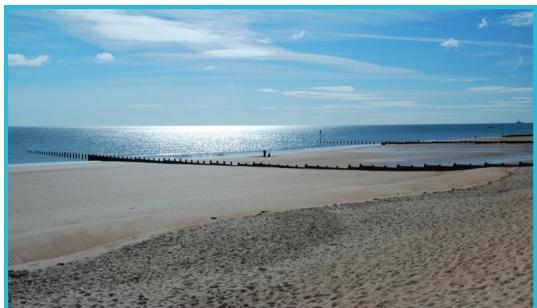


Footfall in 2014 was 280,000 and is on the increase. For many passengers this is their first impression of Northumberland and the group has greatly enhanced the appearance of the station.



Highly Commended

Blyth to Seaton Sluice Links Conservation Group



The group works throughout the year to maintain the paths in the area, helping to make it more easily accessible to the local people as well as visitors and the general public.

The sandy nature of the soil means that it easily collapses in sloping areas and so they have reinforced the banks at the side of The Promenade with grass in an attempt to stabilise them and hold the sand in place. They have also added extra strength by placing blocks to match the existing ones in the area.

They have cut back vegetation and cleared sand from the edges of the paths to make them more defined and to give the public clearer access.

This year they have been joined by a group of local Brownies who are working with them on the project. They have contacted local schools to encourage more young people to become involved and to appreciate the amazing asset in a most attractive coastline and to do all they can to preserve it for future generations.



Highly Commended

Harbottle Community Group - Community Garden



This project is a follow-on from a playground/football pitch development and has involved creating a garden and sitting area with access ramp for wheelchairs and pushchairs leading up to the playfield.



So far 34 individuals have contributed in different ways with the design, offers of materials and physical labour. The project also involved children from the neighbouring school, taking the age range of those who have played a role from 3 to 78 years.

The group has installed bird boxes, hedgehog houses and insect hotels. They use non-chemical weed control and have created a flower meadow area to attract the bees and planted fruit trees for pollination.

Ferns have been planted in a stumpery for diversity – a rare thing for the area.

They hope in the future to encourage the younger children in growing fruit and vegetables

The Group is also conscious of the lack of leisure opportunities in some small communities and so far have started a successful luncheon club, and run art, stained glass and Tai Chi groups.



Best New Project



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Beaconhill Primary School - Beach School



Beaconhill Primary School has become a Beach School which provide pupils with the opportunity to realise how lucky they are to live in Northumberland. A member of staff has been trained as a Beach ranger and she is out almost every day with different groups, visiting various parts of the North-East coast.

The school invested in a mini-bus for these trips, which happen no matter what the weather. Pupils take their classroom work to the beach where they can learn in a stimulating and engaging, beautiful natural environment and also bring their experiences from the beach visits back into the classroom.

Activities are designed to develop social and emotional skills such as team work, trust, communication, initiative, independence and other important life skills.

They are taught to look after their environment, and how litter impacts on the environment and the food chain. They also learn the importance of putting things back once they have finished their activities.

Many of the Beaconhill pupils have had limited opportunities to visit the coast, despite their geographical proximity to it, so the impact on students has been incredible.

They LOVE their visits, they LOVE discovering what Northumberland has to offer and they LOVE learning so much through it. There is already evidence that children are asking their parents to take them back to visit the places they have been with school, indicating an impact on the wider school community.



Runner-Up

Holywell in Bloom Group - Bluebell Wood



A very small group of volunteers is trying to reinstate a group that were involved in Northumbria in Bloom for many years but had dissolved due to ill health and relocation of residents.

Their plans for turning a woodland area which at present is overgrown, unsightly and collects litter will benefit both residents of Holywell and encourage wildlife back into the area.

The group started its work with a small project to develop a sustainable bed on a very drab corner. With the addition of a new village notice board funded by Seaton Valley Council the area has now become a focal point within the village that residents are proud of.

The group has recently acquired an allotment plot and intend to grow their own plants from seed to be able to offer hanging baskets to the local nursing home and they plan to house a planter at the entrance of every road in Holywell, involving the residents to help with their maintenance.



Outstanding Individual Awards



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Mrs Jean Bell

Nominated by Aileen Barrass, Briardale Community Centre



Jean has been the manager of the Briardale Community Centre for 16 years. During those years she has supported different individuals and groups in a variety of environmental projects. She is very passionate about Northumberland and is an inspiration to other people.



Jean is very hard working and is always looking for fresh ideas to bring to the community, as a photographer, crafter, cook, volunteer co-ordinator and gardener. She uses projects to help those going through a difficult time either mentally or physically or having to do community work as pay back. Jean is encouraging people to use their own talents to produce products to learn to run their own business. She has also arranged and taken part in open space and beach clean-ups.

She has been involved in recycling wood by supporting a project called "Men in Sheds" making garden furniture out of old pallets and other wood.



She encourages volunteers to learn more about "grow your own" and runs a large community garden which has vegetables, fruit, flowers and four hens who provide fresh eggs. All the produce is used in the kitchen providing meals for all volunteers.

Jean is one of Northumberland's unsung heroes and will put other people before herself, she inspires her volunteers with her encouragement, care and passion



Mr Peter Dawson

Nominated by Benmar House, MSRRF, Morpeth



Peter has selflessly volunteered for the charity MSRRF based at Benmar House, Morpeth for at least three years. Peter's wife has Multiple Sclerosis and one day, whilst she was receiving her exercise and therapy treatment, Peter approached the manager and said that he would love to transform the rather tired and neglected garden at the front of the building.



Peter works in the garden at every opportunity that he can whenever his wife attends the Centre and has a regular group of 3 or 4 people who help him with the bigger jobs. He has a real gift of persuasion and has encouraged people into volunteering and donating things such as plants, soil, bulbs and compost. He set up a "From the Garden" plant stand where people can give donations for cuttings etc. from the garden. He has motivated a very diverse group of people to become involved including children from Collingwood Arts and Media College, the local TAG Rugby Team, Princes Trust; "The Potting Shed", local farmers and local garden centres.



He has worked tirelessly in all kinds of weather, re-designing and maintaining this now stunning garden. By giving up his time and sharing his gardening expertise, he has transformed the garden beyond anyone's imagination. He has created a space to which people can contribute or where they can simply sit and enjoy what is there. He has created a fantastic, colourful display with the extra dimensions of Touch, Scent and Sound in order to further promote wellness and good health through gardening.



As a direct result of his commitment, enthusiasm and inspiration the garden is now entered as an exhibit in the Northumbria in Bloom and Neighbourhood Garden initiatives.



Mr Kenneth Thompson

Nominated by Alison Jones, Carlisle Park



Kenneth has worked as a volunteer gardener in Carlisle Park, Morpeth for the last 12 years, contributing enormously to the park which is enjoyed and appreciated by so many people, both local residents and those from further afield.



He first came to the Park on a placement from the SHAW (Sheltered Housing and Workshops) project at Cramlington (now known as Azure). Since then he has travelled by bus from his home in Warkworth to Morpeth every Monday and Wednesday. Kenneth stands out with his level of commitment, demonstrated by the length of his unbroken service, he has a fantastic work ethic, taking pride in everything that he does and carrying out tasks to a very high standard.

He is a much valued member of the staff team supporting the gardeners Mark and John in their efforts to keep the park in a colourful and pristine condition.

He can turn his hand to all manner of tasks including looking after the aviary and feeding the birds to weeding, planting, litter-picking, leaf collecting and much, much more!

Since Kenneth's arrival in 2004 the Park has been awarded the 'Green Flag' consistently every year, and he has contributed significantly to this record.

In addition, his continuous hard work has played a part in Morpeth's Britain in Bloom successes over recent years.



Mr Aaron Ward

Nominated by Frances Povey, Bolam Lake



Aaron has been a dedicated volunteer at Bolam Lake from the age of 14, he is now 18 years old and has been visiting the Lake since the age of two.



He has a real affinity with the place springing from his parents who visited the lake before he was born. He showed a keen interest in all things wildlife and visited every Sunday without fail, getting to know the staff very well.



Aaron followed this through by choosing the environment as a career and is currently attending Kirkley Hall College doing a Level 3 in Countryside Management.



Aaron is out in all weathers with the site staff litter-picking, ditch clearing, rhododendron thinning, helping with sick wildlife, helping organise the events programme, back marking walls, informing visitors about the Country park and helping them to make the most of their visits.

He is also involved with Longbenton Air Cadets and he has attended the site with them to work on conservation projects.

Aaron is dedicated, passionate and a real asset to the site, its staff and the public who visit. He is self-effacing and very modest about the input he makes.



Event Highlights



We would like to thank our Sponsors for contributing towards the LOVE Northumberland Awards, as this event would not happen without their continued support.

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