

LOVE Northumberland Awards 2015



Introduction

We are pleased to share with you this brochure which captures the success of the LOVE Northumberland Awards 2015, celebrating the very best in community and voluntary environmental work across the county.

This year was the fifth 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 Recycling Points Challenge and a further two received Bronze Awards 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 Kath Nisbet, Civic Head of Northumberland County Council, welcomed everyone to the awards evening and said "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.

Marmax Products Ltd supported the schools recycling points challenge – presenting a picnic bench to the winning school and a sturdy bench to the runner up – both made from recycled plastic milk bottles and the Helping Hands Environmental Company donated a Handi-cart, useful for community litter picks.

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.

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

Best Children's Project



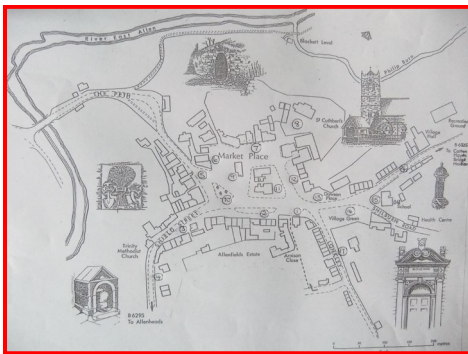
Winner

Allendale Primary School— Allendale Village Trail



This project was initially conceived as a way of engaging pupils of Allendale Primary School in forming an appreciation of their local community environment.

It has encouraged them to discover more about the history and geography of the local area whilst also becoming more engaged with fellow residents across the local community.



The project involved designing and producing a village trail that guides visitors around the village of Allendale charting sites of historical interest, at each location a different historic feature has been photographed and researched by the children.

The booklet includes a brief history of the village, a guide to local amenities and challenges participants with related quiz questions.



Isaac's Well—carved in 1849 from a single piece of sandstone.



Arnison Terrace—a late 19th century cast iron water pump



St Cuthbert's Church—The first church was a wooden structure built in 1174

The pupils were able to be involved in a range of skills by conducting field work to gather information; interviewing local residents; researching data in books and on websites; engaging with various businesses and writing for financial support to local organisations such as the Parish Council.



Runner-Up

St. Andrew's First School—Lovely Heddon



The children have been involved in creating a Holocaust Memorial Garden in their school after learning about the history of the Holocaust and invited members of Gosforth synagogue along to take part in the unveiling of a plaque.

They have also been involved in planting bulbs in the War Memorial Park which is an important focal point in the village. This happens 2-3 times a year as and when needed and involves 30+ children.



They also took part in a litter picking event and the people of Heddon were informed of the type of litter found to try and persuade them to be tidier.

The children also have an allotment within the school grounds where they learn about growing food and then enter their produce in the Heddon show which benefits the community.



Highly Commended

Croftway School/ICCQ— Looking after our Neighbourhood



Croftway School approached ICCQ after attending a local residents meeting to look at ways the school and the children could be involved in the life of the surrounding community.

The children had already identified with their teachers that there were problems with litter, graffiti and dog muck and the school was also nominated by Northumberland County Council to take part in a litter pick pilot.

As a result of joint working with the school, Year 4 children took part in a range of activities such as:

- ♦ Planting hanging baskets
- ♦ Litter picks
- ♦ Planting sessions in Ridley Park
- ♦ Community Safety sessions
- ♦ Learning sessions with dog wardens

The children found their time spent outside was both rewarding and fun – after planting young trees in Ridley Park, one boy had said to his teacher “Miss, this has been the best day of my life!”



This project was rewarded with a HandiCart donated by our sponsors Helping Hand Environmental – a brilliant little cart to take with them on community litter picks which should help them on future project work in their local area.

The Northumberland Schools Recycling Points Challenge

The Recycling Points Challenge was introduced 3 years ago to encourage Northumberland schools to reduce, re-use and recycle as much as possible. Within this challenge, schools gain points for the different activities that they choose to do and compete with other schools to achieve the highest score.



Winner

Josephine Butler Primary – Northumberland Church of England



With an impressive 268 points Josephine Butler Primary School have continued to work very hard since they won the challenge last year, it has been lovely to see how the school has progressed their work since the last challenge, with recycling messages now becoming engrained into everyday school life and reaching the whole school

Here's a small taster of the work that they have completed for this year's challenge:

- ♦ Made a life sized igloo from plastic milk bottles for the foundation stage role play area.
- ♦ Learnt how to reduce food waste by using up leftovers. Year 6 took part in a pasta and sauce challenge – Their design brief was to make a pasta and sauce using leftovers that could be given out for free at the Great North Run pasta party.
- ♦ Children completed a litter pick and litter grading activity in the area around their local community centre, the skate park and the streets around the school.
- ♦ Some children made greetings cards from recycled plastic bottles



As well as their Trophy the school was presented with a Junior Picnic Table made from 1430 recycled plastic milk bottles- kindly provided by Marmax Products Ltd

Runner-Up

Belsay First School

Belsay First School were a close runner up with 203 points

This is some of the work that Belsay First School completed for the challenge:

- ♦ The eco-committee did a recycling audit and an assembly to remind the school what they can recycle
- ♦ The school held a science and waste week, making smoothies, curry and paella from leftovers.



As well as their Trophy the school was presented with a Junior Picnic Table made from 429 recycled plastic milk bottles- kindly provided by Marmax Products Ltd

School Sustainable Travel Award

This award is being presented by Go Smarter Northumberland to schools that have gone the extra mile to promote sustainable transport for the journey to school.

This year as part of the Go Smarter to School programme we signed up to Modeshift STARS. STARS is a Department of Transport funded scheme which has been rolled out to all schools in England. This is a national accreditation scheme which enables schools to work towards bronze, silver or gold awards.

Modeshift Stars inspires schools to take ownership of their transport issues, whilst encouraging a reduction in car use and increasing the number of children walking, cycling, scooting and taking public transport to school.



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Smarter
to school**
Northumberland

Bronze Award

Mickley First School



Mickley First School worked with the local police to monitor the speed of traffic to highlight the dangers of speeding and improve road safety outside their school.

Pupils used speed guns to measure how fast cars were travelling and in maths lessons used the data to produce graphs and charts showing the average speed of traffic.



Pupils and parents also held a sponsored cycle ride from Wylam to Newburn as part of a fund raising project by the Parents Teachers Association which also helped to raise the profile of cycling to school and active travel.



Bronze Award

Mowbray Primary School



Mowbray Primary School held a fun walk with everyone dressing in traffic light or zebra crossing colours to highlight the importance of walking to school to reduce congestion.

They have also set up a Park and Stride scheme from the car park of their local public house, which is only a five minute walk from school. They regularly remind parents who have to bring the car to school, to park in the here and walk the rest of the way to school to further reduce the congestion and improve road safety around their school.



A Focus on Our Environmental Champions

The LOVE Northumberland awards have been 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 and community groups and volunteers who all work towards preserving and enhancing the environment in the county.

Northumberland County Council wants to maintain and improve on this 'clean' image, and is working hard to keep the county beautiful. But it can't achieve this alone and therefore rely on the hard work and dedication of residents, businesses and community groups to work together towards that goal.

The council tackles a range of issues including fly-tipping and graffiti. Local clean-up events, street cleaning and parks and grounds maintenance are also covered by the council's officers.

Across the county there are also people who are willing to give up a bit more of their time to improve their local environment. The work of these volunteers is invaluable, and an important part of the LOVE Northumberland campaign is providing support to environmental volunteering.

This year we recognised the considerable efforts of some of our Environmental Champions who are currently working across the county. Many have been doing this for years, often on a weekly basis, with very little recognition for their efforts – although the improvements and cleanliness in the areas they work have been a huge benefit to all who live and work there.





Our Environmental Champions were presented with their certificates by Her Grace the Duchess of Northumberland, from left to right: Amanda Gilchrist representing Seaton Vale Residents Association; Barry McWilliam; Dot Edwards and Vanessa Braidwood.

Best Young People's Project



Winner

Tomorrow's People - Amble Works



Since December 2013 Tomorrow's People have helped 72 young people overcome barriers to education and employment and engage with the local council, colleges, job centres and other youth projects. They differ from other projects as they focus on the individual needs of the young person and tailor their programmes to fit the needs of the person.

They complete community challenges and voluntary work such as gardening at the local church, re-painting the Youth Centre and have raised funds for other charities such as the RNLI by completing a triathlon, and organised cakes sales, raffles and tombola's.



They have helped with litter picking at Druridge Bay and also been involved in the clearing of a local pond/wildlife centre which will be kept regenerated by the Council and the young people.

They hope to fund more confidence building sessions to continue to provide help for the young people in Northumberland to reduce youth unemployment and build local relationships.



Best Urban Project



Winner

Briardale Community Centre



This group have been successfully operating for the past 15 years providing indoor and outdoor space and activities to the local community and have in excess of 50 volunteers. Their three main areas of work are Youth, Environment and Community Support and Engagement.

They have a community kitchen that offers healthy meals and training, indoor and outdoor sports facilities; training rooms; meeting spaces, IT, stay and play sessions, youth groups, kids clubs, family support services and are part of Blyth food bank.



They started planting their community orchard over 15 years ago and now have over 50 fruit trees, some of the apple trees are native to Northumberland.

The volunteers have attended courses on tree grafting so local residents can come to the centre and receive an apple tree for their gardens.



The Young Environmental Wardens Group work across Blyth clearing overgrown areas, and are involved in beach clear-ups, litter picks and one month a year they spend weeding and tidying up the War Memorial ready for the Remembrance Day Service.

Their wildlife area and woodland is a prized area where young people work towards their John Muir Awards who also engage in bush craft activities and conservation.



Runner-Up

Ellington Allotment Association—New Allotments



Ellington Allotments have a committee of 10 volunteers who assist with the running and maintenance of the site alongside plot holders who work together to enhance this community project.

The Allotments promotes and manages the use of an all-round gardening experience to users assisting in the pursuit of gardening as a recreation, promoting health both physically and nutritionally. The group has a website that gives advice on what to grow and provides healthy recipes.



Ellington community lacked a daytime focal point since the loss of its original allotments over 40 years ago with the closure of the mines, Alcan Smelter and the demise of the local working men's club.

The allotments have brought many people together to look at their own lives, increasing confidence, communication, physical exercise and healthy eating from their own produce which to many is a new experience.



In just a short space of time some of the volunteers have dug, cultivated and fenced the site giving 40 plots, also providing an area for raised beds and a sensory garden. The area is easily accessible for wheelchair users with suitable pathways.

It is open to anyone who wishes to join their community – they even have an Eco toilet for visitors.



Highly Commended

Groundwork NE & Cumbria in Partnership — Growing Well at Hospital



Over 100 volunteers aged from 3 to 80 have demonstrated their love for Northumberland and pulled together to create the “Growing Well at Hospital” garden in Wansbeck General Hospital.

This revitalised space provides an important opportunity for staff, patients and visitors to relax and offers a peaceful, therapeutic alternative to waiting rooms for all to enjoy.



Throughout its creation, every opportunity was taken to offer local people the chance to learn and develop skills. Several young people have obtained their Horticulture Level 1 award and whilst constructing raised beds volunteers received training from a dry stone wall tutor.



Groundwork ‘Active Green Living’ older persons gardening project have grown mostly wildflowers native to and grown from seed gathered in Northumberland, whilst volunteers from Groundwork’s Northumbrian Environmental Action Team’ and ‘Healthy Parks Healthy Minds’ programme with members of the public built raised beds, fences and learnt to construct willow tunnels.

Students from King Edward School made a mosaic patio and primary children learnt about gardening whilst planting and tending to flowers and vegetables

Local people now have a lasting sense of ownership, love and respect for the garden which is free of charge – as are the fresh vegetables!



Best Coast & Countryside Project



Winner

Hexhamshire and Slaley Parish Councils & the Friends of the North Pennines

Dukesfield Smelters and Carriers Project



This project has been centred on the conservation of two striking 18th Century stone and brick gothic-style arches which sit alongside a bridleway in a wooded valley 3 miles south of Hexham. Grade II listed, they are the last visible remains of one of the earliest lead smelting mills in the region, dating back to the 1660's.

The arches were in a precarious state, suffering from collapsed masonry, stream erosion, and root damage and this caused concern from local residents which stimulated the collaboration between the two Parish Councils and the Friends of the North Pennines to set up a charity to protect this site. This project has drawn in numerous people who have enthusiastically undertaken a wide range of heritage related activities incorporating archaeological and archival research.

Successful conservation work means the arches are now secure, and the clearance of scrubby spruce trees has helped improve the biodiversity of the site. On-site interpretation means current and future generations will be able to appreciate them and better understand their pivot role in the North East's lead industry, especially when accompanied by the variety of walks and cycle leaflets which encourage residents and visitors to explore the beautiful surroundings which once linked mines to the mill and onwards to Tyneside's quays and markets.



Runner-Up

Swarland Village Action

Swarland Woods



This project was funded by P4C (Defra Paths for Communities Initiative) and supported by the Forestry Commission, Northumberland County Council, Newton-on-the-Moor Parish Council, local users, groups and businesses.

It took 593 volunteer hours that contributed towards upgrading a neglected footpath into a 790metre multi-user bridleway which combines with other footpaths and roads to provide a circular route. The project has opened up access to the historic grounds of Swarland Hall and leads to two Grade II listed stone cattle shelters.



Before



and after

The new interpretation boards also give information about the flora and fauna that can be found in the vicinity of the path and both roe deer and red squirrels have been spotted in the area.

It was intended that the path would help improve access for children from Swarland First School for nature walks, and also the local Brownie Group for their activities.



The new wide and well-constructed footpath encourages people of all ages and abilities to enjoy walking, and it is also wheelchair and pushchair friendly.



Highly Commended

Blyth to Seaton Sluice Links Conservation Group



This group have been together for 11 years and meet up on alternate Saturday mornings, their oldest member is 82 and they have recently been joined by two younger people aged 17.

The group work throughout the year to maintain the dunes by carrying out tasks such as litter-picking, clearing steps and paths and cutting back vegetation to help preserve the area for the enjoyment of future generations.



They collect litter and remove glass and record the amount of litter collected on these occasions. They have been involved in the Marine Conservation Society Annual Beach Watch which is the UK's biggest beach clean and litter survey.



The group have recently worked with two other groups of young people from the local school and also the local rugby club and are hoping to encourage more young people to join them in keeping their local beach an area of outstanding beauty.



Best New Project



Winner

Broomley Meadow Project



Inspired by last year's Bee Project, a parent from Broomley First School decided to create a meadow in her garden and thought it would be a good idea to involve the local school children and thus the Broomley Meadow Project was created.

The children were initially invited to see a local resident's garden to see an established meadow of over 35 years old and from this visit they learned about gardening environmentally, collecting data from quadrants and were given hay to help them create their new meadow.



The children were put into groups, elected a group leader and organised themselves and their activities. They had to measure the size of their plots, work out the amount of seeds needed, think about the orientation of the sun and examine the soil type.



Following field trips, several workshops were organised with visiting lecturers and professional personnel all doing so free of charge. A bat evening was organised in the new meadow where children could exhibit their work to family and friends. The project has been entirely volunteer-led, raising funding through coffee mornings, plant sales, donations from individuals and groups such as the PTA, however the biggest donation has been of resources such as bat and bird boxes, seeds and peoples time rather than financial.



The project is providing a fantastic learning tool and has brought together a multitude of people from the local community and various educational institutions such as Natural England and Newcastle University, who wouldn't normally get the chance to interact.



Runner-Up

Coquetdale Wild About Club

Philip's Field Wildflower Nursery and Wildlife Garden



Coquetdale Wild About Club is a constituted voluntary group which was set up two years ago to educate children and young people in Coquetdale about wildlife, farming, local history and outdoor skills. Past sessions have included bushcraft, archaeology, mini beast hunts, a farm habitat tour and a night wildlife walk. The site was initially developed with a group of ten explorer scouts aged 13-16 who met weekly and has been further developed by groups of adult volunteers.



Philip's Field is a wildflower nursery whose home is an empty building plot in the middle of Rothbury (kindly lent by the owner Philip). They plant seeds they collect from Northumbrian sites to grow into plants to improve habitats such as precious upland hay meadows, enhance roadside verges for pollinators, create butterfly habitats, improve genetic diversity in isolated populations of rare species and create public wildlife gardens across Northumberland.



They are also creating an attractive wildlife garden on the plot to inspire people in a more sustainable and wildlife friendly way. The plot is in a very visible area and has transformed an unsightly, litter strewn area into an attractive place which has become a focus of interest and activity in their village.



They have also engaged a group of adult volunteers with a range of severe and enduring mental health issues who have been involved in developing the site and will be collecting seeds and planting out plants in the autumn.



Highly-Commended

Northumberland Community Enterprise Ltd

Bedlington and Morpeth Community Allotments



Bedlington and Morpeth Community Allotments work with individuals and community groups to provide gardening and related crafts. The Group provides opportunities for volunteering and work experience, learning, socialising, and confidence and team building and have worked alongside Tomorrow's People with young people. They work with up to 10 young people on a 10 week rolling programme.



The Group work in partnership with Groundwork and also plans and co-ordinates gardening and food activities with school children. The allotment co-ordinator has provided work experience to students at Northumberland College and Collingwood School, Morpeth.

They have worked in partnership with Bedlington in Bloom who use the site to make and store the hanging baskets for the town.



Through open days and events they promote the beautiful outdoor community space, also attending events such as Stobhill Big Lunch with a stall making and providing sunflower seed packets to the local community.

They have joined the Heritage Open Day's scheme this year to provide information about local history and the heritage of the area.



Outstanding Individual Awards



Mrs Aileen Barrass

Nominated by Briardale Community Centre



Aileen has been a dedicated volunteer at the Community Centre for over 10 years working with young people.

- ♦ She has set up and runs an award winning Environmental Group.
- ♦ Gives up her spare time to do beach clean ups, litter picks and environmental clean ups with young people
- ♦ Manages the John Muir Awards Scheme
- ♦ Takes her groups to learn bushcraft skills and woodland conservation
- ♦ Fundraises for her group and encourages young people to do the same for other charities
- ♦ Runs a Kids Kitchen.



Those are just a few of Aileen's achievements, she works tirelessly to support these young people, encouraging them to learn new skills in a fun and engaging way and is constantly innovating and reshaping the ways in which to get the children of the community involved in projects.



Over the past few years Aileen's Group has won many awards such as the 2015 Spirit of the Community Award, Best Community Group and 2013/2014 Northumberland Finest Community Benefit Award.



Aileen has proved to be an invaluable member of the Briardale team and has never looked for recognition or thank you's for all her hard work, after a decade of working with local youths Aileen has helped to provide a sturdy foundation on which some of the most vulnerable children in Northumberland can reach their potential.



Mr Douglas Renton

Nominated by Belford Woodland Project



Over the last 3 years Dougie (as he is known to his friends and his wife June), have worked closely with Belford Community Group and has managed to breathe new life into a neglected community woodland in the centre of Belford. Freely giving up his time 4 or 5 times a week.



Working tirelessly in clearing weeds, planting numerous plants, maintaining a grass area, installing a path and gate, providing composting facilities and the installation of bird boxes encouraging wildlife, he has worked closely with the school and local groups, educating them about the local natural habitat. He has also picked up litter and tidied up overgrown areas, as well as planting native species of plants and trees.



He is a kind, compassionate and friendly gentleman, and is passionate about helping other people and local causes, not seeking any personal fame or fortune. He also volunteers for at least two other charities.



He has made a real and lasting difference in a tight knit vibrant community. Next time you are travelling through Belford, stop for a walk through this beautiful community woodland, you will be inspired.



Mr Denis Peel

Nominated by Wylam Parish Council



For 10 years, since 2005, Denis, a retired Wylam resident has engaged with the community on a voluntary basis to raise awareness of the impact of invasive plant species, principally Himalayan Balsam and Giant Hogweed and has implemented a programme to clear them from Wylam Parish.

Denis has also identified areas of Japanese Knotweed locally and as a result Wylam Parish Council has commissioned Tyne Rivers Trust to inject and eradicate this plant.



Denis stands out for his dedication, determination and organising ability. He takes an active part in the clearance programme and this year alone has cleared over 200 Giant Hogweed plants from Wylam riverside.

Each year he organises a team of local volunteers to help in the task and works throughout the growing season.

He gives regular presentations to the East Tynedale Parish and Town Councils Forum and has forged links with groups doing similar work in the parishes and towns surrounding Wylam.



Event Highlights



The Launch



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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