

LOVE Northumberland awards 2011



Rewarding community achievement

In 2011, LOVE Northumberland launched a set of awards to mark out projects that are enriching our wonderful county.

Entries were invited for projects that would fit into one or more of the following categories:

- Best **new project** (projects that are less than one year old)
- Best **ongoing project** (projects where you can show year on year improvements)
- Best **'urban' project** (projects or work that happens in places where people live)
- Best **coast or countryside project** (projects that happen in more rural areas, where less people live)
- Best **young people's project** (where most of the participants are aged 12 -25)
- Best **children's project** (where most of the participants are aged 11 and under)

All entries were considered and a shortlisted, of projects was invited along to, the Alnwick Garden on Wednesday July 13, to be presented with prizes presented by Her Grace the Duchess of Northumberland.

Winning entries, received a £250 prize and runner-up projects a £100 prize, with the money to spent on something that will benefit the project or work. Other shortlisted finalists recieved garden centre vouchers.



Main sponsor of the awards was the Co-operative Community Fund in the North East and support was also provided by the Forestry Commission and Com-vert, which makes compost and sustainable gardening products.

[Love Northumberland Awards 2011 Video](#)

[You can download the full list of awards here](#)

[Best new project](#)

Winner: Great Whittington in Bloom

Great Whittington Wildflower Area Project:



A group of 12 volunteers who have been together since 2006.



Their latest project is to revive an unsightly problem area in the village by turning it into a wildflower meadow and creating a space for recreation and wildlife watching. The project is involving people of all ages and helping to develop a sense of community within the village.

Runner up: Prudhoe Path Force

This group has been together for 10 years, helping out with footpath maintenance around Prudhoe and acting as the 'eyes and ears' of the rights of way team.



Their latest project is to revive an unsightly problem area in the village by turning it into a wildflower meadow and creating a space for recreation and wildlife watching. The project is involving people of all ages and helping to develop a sense of community within the village.



They are so passionate about the area in which they live that in the last six months they have published a series of leaflets to promote walks and the countryside around Prudhoe to visitors and residents alike.

[Best ongoing project](#)

Winner: Prudhoe Ground Force

An excellent application from this group volunteers who have been together for three years, working on all sorts of 'environmental' improvements around Prudhoe, including planting trees and bulbs, clearing litter, eradicating Himalayan Balsam on the banks of the Tyne and clearing scrub on the Spetchells.



They have met every Monday morning since July 2008 and have notched up more than 600 hours of voluntary work!!

Runner up: Widdrington Station and Stobswood Litterpickers

This group of volunteers saw a need in the villages of Widdrington Station and Stobswood and took action.



Following discussions over bacon butties and coffee, the volunteers equipped themselves with litterpickers and gloves from the council and have been tackling litter in the villages and their surrounding areas ever since, hoping to lead by example in the improvement of the place where they live.



Other **finalists** in this category were Rennington Parish Council for community bulb planting at Rock Village, Rennington Village and Stamford; and Castlegate area residents association for Castle Vale Park.

[Best urban project](#)

Winner: Stocksfield Riverwatch Group

This group has been together for 13 years and in the past three have taken on the monthly monitoring and sampling of the Stocksfield Burn, in order to provide data which is used by The Environment Agency and The Tyne Rivers Trust, as well as the removal of Himalayan Balsam, creating more habitat for native species.



This award will help them expand the scope of the project and involve the local schools in the monitoring of riverfly larvae, as an indicator of the health of the burn.

Runner up: Prudhoe Community Allotments

Over the past ten years this group of 20 volunteers has transformed a derelict allotment site into a resource for the whole community, with small plots and raised beds, running open days and events to enable anyone who wants to grow their own food to do so.



The group is moving towards teaching based activities, and has a strong commitment to using their large skill base to provide allotment space for disadvantaged young people.

The other **finalist** in this category was the Friends of Gallagher Park.

[Best coast or countryside project](#)

Winner: Berwick Wildlife Group

With over 50 volunteers, built up over the past seven years, a well put together application from Berwick Wildlife Group highlighted their community involvement and partnership working to safeguard, monitor and survey the wildlife and ecology around Berwick upon Tweed, getting involved in decisions on local land use to help new projects work in harmony with the natural environment.



Runner up: Corbridge Heritage Trails

One of the most inspiring applications in terms of the enterprising way in which funds have been raised to support the project, using their own efforts through providing talks and guided walks to raise funds in addition to successful funding applications.



The Corbridge heritage trails have been created by just eight volunteers over two years and are enabling residents and visitors alike to learn about and appreciate the local history and natural environment in Corbridge and neighbouring areas.

Other **finalists** in this category were Ellington Pond Management Committee for their pond restoration; Friends of Bolam Lake; and The Longhoughton Church Gardeners.

[Best young people's project](#)

Winner: The Northumberland Coast AONB

Young Rangers on the Coast

Set up four and a half years ago, the Young Rangers on the Coast are volunteers aged between 13 and 20 who carry out practical conservation work within the Northumberland Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.



They have recently been working on gorse control on whin grasslands, pond maintenance, habitat improvement on Coquet island, and have adopted 'Quarryfields' site in Seahouses, using their own ideas on how to improve it for visitors and wildlife.

Runner up: Ponteland High and Middle School Pond Restoration Group

This is a great example of young people turning a problem into an inspiration. When plans to extend and develop Ponteland High School encountered the protected Great Crested Newt, the Pond restoration group was formed and they decided to get to work on reviving the pond.



By removing litter, installing new entrances, paths and planting and they created resource for biology students from all schools to use to study wetland flora and fauna.

[Best children's project](#)

Winner: Darras Hall First School

Outdoor Area at Darras Hall First School:

The children of Darras Hall First School were asked what they thought of their school grounds and they decided they would like to have a quiet space for creative and imaginative play.



So work began on regenerating a boggy, uneven patch of derelict ground within the school, resulting in the creation of a great new space for the whole school.



The project was inspirational in its involvement of the whole school and the surrounding community, with determined fundraising through quiz nights, a grant from Barclays and donations.

Runner up: Friends of Bedlington Nursery

Wellies For Wildlife:

This small group of volunteers, who have been together for four years, have created their Wellies for Wildlife project at Bedlington Sure Start.



A wildlife garden and pond have been created enabling children from a very young age to learn about living things, recycling and also about water safety!



Local people are being encouraged to provide their old wellies to be used as plantpots, and scout groups and local schools are already involved in the project as it provides the only accessible pond for three miles.