



Natural Kirklees Annual General Meeting
2pm Wednesday 4th December 2024
Beaumont Park

Attendees	Organisation
Ed Day	Chair Natural Kirklees
David Rudd	Trustee Natural Kirklees
Phil Slater	Trustee Natural Kirklees
Mark Ferris	KC Parks Development Team
Claire Howe	FOCAL Community Activity Lindley
Christine Senior	Trustee Natural Kirklees
Stuart Taylor	Trustee Natural Kirklees
Tommy Hoyle	Park Development Officer
Julie Hirst	Treasurer Natural Kirklees
Heather Cameron	Park Development Officer
Joan Vevers	Secretary Natural Kirklees
Maryke Woods	Kirklees Operations Manager for Parks and Green Spaces
Win Harrison	Holmepride Community in Action
Stella Griffiths	FO Greenhead Park
Phillip Lucitt	Blooming Marsh & Lindley
Dave Wilde	Denby Dale Parish Council
Peter Taylor	Burton Environment Grp
Dick Wall	Newsome Ward Community Forum
Neil Walker	Spenn Valley Civic Society
Charlotte Watson	Milnsbridge Enhancement Group
Gill Logan	KC Volunteer Co-ordinator
Ali Stopher	EPIKS
Ken Gledhill	Birkby Comm Wildlife Garden
Sue Shaw	Huddersfield & District Badger Group
Nick Hodgkinson	Huddersfield Woodscape
Quinton Coles	Huddersfield Woodscape
Gill Young	FO Crow Nest Park
Sue Shaw	Hudds & District Badger Protection Grp
Jackie Hirst	FO Honley Old Wood
Christine Sykes	Mirfield in Bloom
Glenis Ireland	FO Greenhead Park
Jane Griffiths	FO Greenhead Park
Helen Sykes	FO Cliff Rec
Paul Coleman	Brockholes Green Spaces
Julie Dempster	FO Beaumont Park
Byron Jones	FO Norman Park
Jordan Nelsen	FO Norman Park

Mary Keady	Urban Tree Huggers
Glennis Lennon	Urban Tree Huggers
Jean Sengelow	BH & C Group & FO Rectory Park
John Stead	FO Rectory Park
Apologies	Organisation
Ruth Edwards	Mirfield in Bloom
Jenny Hemming	Marsden Walker are Welcome
Karen Mayfield	RRAG
Stefanie Rofke	Trustee Natural Kirklees

Item	Action
<p>Welcome and Introductions The meeting commenced with Ed welcoming everyone and asking members to introduce themselves.</p>	
<p>Minutes of the meeting held in November 2023 With no matters arising from the minutes of the previous meeting, David Rudd proposed and Julie Hirst seconded that the minutes were a true record. Ed mentioned that Graham West was back but still in hospital. We wish him well.</p>	
<p>Presentation Maryke Woods, Kirklees Council Operations Manager for Parks and Green Spaces gave an update on Service Delivery. She said that finances are not good, they will have specified targets, there are very few bedding plants available, and staff will be reduced by 1/3. Recreation Grounds will not be cut so frequently, and they will rely more on Volunteer Groups. While undesirable, not cutting the edges of green spaces would at least add a little to biodiversity. The Parks Development Team will be split into 2 areas instead of 4. Coordinators will have less availability to support volunteers on site. They will use a traffic light system to reach every group to discuss a proforma of what each group has in place to gauge what support is needed and what expertise they will have. The Asset Team in the Council could be more co-operative. Corporate Landlords will be directed to be more helpful with volunteers. Mark Ferris has discussed the situation with them and given them more information about Natural Kirklees and the volunteer groups. Peter Taylor highlighted how the Assets Team do not appreciate that voluntary groups are not like commercial outlets; we do not have assets, nor much money. Maryke said that they are working with the legal department to try to do things differently. Volunteers should not be expected to pay to do work for the Council. Jane FO Greenhead Park said that they would like a clear idea of what the Council were no longer going to do. In the new year there will be more information about what the Council do in certain areas. The information will come through Natural Kirklees to individual groups. Ken BCWG asked whether the Council had a statutory minimum service level that</p>	

<p>needed to be provided. Maryke explained that the Council had a statutory obligation to provide allotments but no legal obligations regarding Parks and Green Spaces. PROW is now with Highways. Lots of questions were asked about what the Council will be doing in the future. Will there be more volunteer groups created? There will be a push to encourage volunteers. There is frustration from volunteer groups who get no response from the Council. VC's should be able to authorise a task for a group.</p>	
<p>Trustee Report</p> <p>The annual Trustee Report was circulated prior to the meeting to each group and with the agreement of those attending, due to time constraints was not discussed but is now recorded in these minutes.</p> <p>Before commencing with this report, I want to pass our best wishes to Graham West for a hoped for full and speedy recovery. Graham was a person we could work with, to promote volunteering and the incredible work groups undertake to improve the parks and green spaces in Kirklees.</p> <p>Last year we held our AGM on the 9th of November at the constituency offices off the then Batley and Spen MP, Kim Leadbeater in Heckmondwike, attended by 31 members and guests. It was a quite upbeat meeting where we were able to announce that we had reached agreement regarding establishing a service level agreement for Natural Kirklees with the council over the use of their premises at Peace Pit, we would be sponsoring the countryside marquee at Honley Show and inviting member groups to showcase their groups activities and had arranged to have a meeting with the new chief executive of Kirklees Council Steve Mawson. We were however also aware the council cutbacks could have a major impact on the council's and our member groups activities and our ability to continue normal post Covid service. The saying every cloud has a silver lining turned out to be more like every silver lining may have a host of clouds.</p> <p>In autumn last year I approached Pennine Rotary, and they kindly donated 5,000 purple Crocus bulbs which we were able to distribute at the AGM, in recognition of their work to help to eradicate polio from the planet.</p> <p>We entered 2024 and met the new chief executive along with Graham West at Beaumont Park in January as he wanted to understand our role and also visit one of the "major 5" parks in his new council area. Well he was impressed both with the work we do and that of the friends of Beaumont Park it was apparent that the council cutbacks were going to have a major effect and he implied that the council would be reviewing all of the responsibilities they currently have and where they chose not to prioritise certain activities he did undertake to do the things that they both had to, and wanted to do well.</p>	

By this time we were aware that our proposed venture at Peace Pit was not going to proceed as we had hoped a few months earlier due to a combination of a vehicle weight limit on the bridges giving access to the facility and also the life expectancy of the parks and green spaces maintenance team remaining on that site.

The first quarter of 2024 continued a theme of good news and bad news - by this time Stuart had taken full editorial responsibility for our newsletter but Tim Duke dropped the bombshell that he was moving away from the area and would be relinquishing his role as trustee as and when the move took place. Tim has now taken up residence in Pickering and after a few delays his furniture and other possessions have caught up with him and once again I would like to thank Tim as one of the original trustees of Natural Kirklees for all his efforts over the past seven years and especially for the help and advice he gave me when I took over as chair.

I returned from holiday in February and received an enquiry from Westlands who provide Unwins seed packets offering us for free packets of flowers and vegetables which resulted in turning part of my house into what I suspect was one of the largest non-commercial seed stockists in the country for a few days. These were duly distributed to members and the remainder we passed to Grow to School for their use at Wilton Park and around various schools.

At our March quarterly members meeting, we had 22 attendees at Beaumont Park and we announced for the third year running we were offering a small grant scheme and from April we were able to provide 15 member groups funding up to £750 to either cover the cost or contribute to their environmental projects. Additionally, Tim and fellow Trustees Phil Slater and Kat Woolley had met with Jo Rawson, Community Engagement Manager, Yorkshire Wildlife Trust in the latter part of 2023 and she gave a presentation meeting introducing Team Wilder. Luke A'Bear, Project Manager, River Holme Connections and Nature's Holme Landscape Recovery Project, also spoke about their Landscape Recovery project.

Tim and I met with the newly appointed Parks and Green Spaces Operations Manager, Maryke Woods, together with the team leader for parks development Mark Ferris who gave us a frank insight and timescale for the now quite extensive cutbacks to be undertaken within the department. I am not sure congratulations on Maryke's appointment were necessarily the correct sentiment as this must have been a very onerous year for her but hopefully she will accept them in relation to her marriage to a familiar face to many of us, Robert Whittaker who now works for Wakefield Council and we wish them every happiness.

Thirty members attended the June quarterly meeting held again in Heckmondwike where we were able to inform members of our perception of what the changes to the personnel at the Council will mean. Gill and Heather Cameron attended straight from an initial meeting where they were advised what was happening within the department. Ama gave the meeting a presentation regarding the Good Food For All project.

In the run up to July we liaised with the Honley Show committee to sponsor the Countryside Marquee and feedback from the member groups who had a stall all said they wanted to attend the event in 2025 and the show committee thanked us saying it was the best presented and attended Countryside Marquee in recent times.

Having asked Jo Rawson to speak at our recent March meeting, Tim and I reciprocated with a presentation at Team Wilder's event at Crow Nest Park a few days after the Honley Show, to introduce the audience to the services we at natural Kirklees are able to provide to volunteer groups.

By now the morale and interaction with the council was affecting communication and our activity and interaction reduced in the summer months as a result. July, as in years past, sees what was supposed to be a simple process of renegotiating the public liability insurance renewal. While communication with the member groups was simple and not time consuming, we were able to provide the required renewal schedule to the brokers in good time. Unfortunately, Liz Allen, who many of you will have had contact with since the inception of the policy, decided to further her career into HR at another company, meaning we lost her knowledge of what we do. We welcomed Gill Lindon but were also informed that Sun Alliance had employed a new underwriter which in some ways was akin to kicking a hornet's nest. While our insurance cover was never broken, we now understand there is a single policy in Natural Kirklees name with named groups having cover for £10m public liability. The trustees previously took a decision to reserve a sum of money to cover specific eligible groups to cover the loss of tools while stored in their green space (up to a maximum of £500). This left 5 groups with equipment greater than this value to be covered under the all risks section at an additional cost. While we were able to provide confirmation of cover, it was late November before we could provide an accurate schedule and employers liability certificate directly to members. These are different documents to previous years. A further aggravation followed the renewal as there was a page of unanswered questions as Griffiths and Arnold the brokers announced they are being taken over and so responses are not quite dealt with the speed we would like for a relaxing life.

September saw our third quarterly meeting with 28 attendees where Yun Gao, Sara Mahdizadeh and Tara Tahere Asghani from

<p>University of Huddersfield presented their research project into Community Gardens. The project is still ongoing, but Sara has now left the project. Yun has offered us facilities at the University for our next quarterly meeting where we hope to be able to visit the Hepworth Building to take a tour.</p> <p>Pennine Rotary have again offered purple crocus bulbs again in regard to their eradication of polio project but this year we saw the unfortunate passing of Malvern Goodall who among many philanthropic activities was a key member of the Kirklees Badger Protection Group. Until recently my next door neighbour, Malvern was quite an influence on my early retirement years and the Rotarians asked me to present to them on the work Natural Kirklees does, especially he was a key member and was able to lighten the mood when I told them that when Peter Turner needed a reference for me to become a trustee for Natural Kirklees, Malvern gave me a glowing reference but under the heading "The Neighbour from Hell".</p> <p>So, to finish - a difficult year with some significant highlights. We have 108 Full Members of which 96 are included in our public liability insurance policy, plus we have a further 24 Associate Members. We are financially secure for at least the coming year as Julie will tell you shortly but with Tim's departure and Kat Woolley also resigning due to work commitments, I sincerely hope she may one day rejoin us. We are very short of resource to continue running the charity as it is now. I want to end on a positive note as I can, so I will inform the members separately on where we go from here in 2025. I would like to thank our hosts - the Friends of Beaumont Park, my fellow trustees, colleagues at Kirklees Council and all our members for their support.</p> <p>Ed Day - Chair of the Trustees</p>	
<p>Treasurers Annual Report</p> <p>Julie gave a report on the finances of Natural Kirklees</p> <p>I will give you a quick rundown of the finances for this year. We started the year with a balance of £47,897. We were given one grant from Kirklees Council for £33,000 and one for £5,000 for the Peace Pit project from TSL (Third Sector Leaders).</p> <p>We were refunded £750 from the badger group from the small grant scheme for 2023 who disbanded for a short while, but we are pleased to say they have set up a new group again and along with unrestricted funds from bank interest of £1,542 this made total receipts of £88,189.00</p> <p><u>Insurance</u> - we have again paid out £535 for trustee insurance as we continue to provide advice to members, and this covers us should we get anything seriously wrong. We have paid the insurance premium for the public liability cover after the year end but reserved the sum as a liability in the accounts.</p>	

<p><u>Media</u> - £53 was spent on flyers.</p> <p><u>Administration and accounting</u> - we continue to use Norton Security Software at a cost of £20 and WYCAS for our year end accounting at £420.</p> <p><u>Events and activities</u> - once again we had a stall at Honley Show, and have spent money on topsoil for the Peace Pit project which altogether came to £1,783 .</p> <p><u>Small grant scheme</u> - Natural Kirklees awarded 14 grants up to £750 covering a wide range from plants etc. To the eradication of Japanese knotweed from 3 sites which was undertaken by River Holme Connections. Altogether a total of £7,504 was spent.</p> <p>In total we spent £10,315 leaving a balance of £77,874 from which the insurance renewal premium and the account scrutiny have since been paid.</p> <p>Ed said that we hold a reserve to cover our expenditure for the insurance policy and administration for the next 2 years. Public liability Insurance is our largest expenditure.</p> <p>Insurance Facility</p> <p>There have been a lot of changes with the brokers and insurance company. We presented the renewal schedule in August and Sun Alliance changed the underwriter. There will be one policy in the name of Natural Kirklees. Ed explained who and what activities were covered will be posted on the website, but all insured groups should have received a copy of the policy documents</p>	
<p>Appointment of Trustees and Officers</p> <p>In accordance with our Constitution, 1/3 of the trustees must stand down each year. However, Tim Duke and Kat Woolley have resigned their trusteeship so that this year Christine Senior and Julie Hirst will stand for re-election; both are willing to be re-appointed. Both were duly re-elected. We have 2 proposed additional Trustees - Gill Young and Claire Howe. Ed proposed Gill Young and Claire Howe, Stuart seconded Gill and Joan seconded Claire. The current Chair, Secretary and Treasurer are all willing to carry on and were duly re-elected for another year.</p> <p>Skipton Building Society Community Giving Award</p> <p>Skipton Building Society nominated Natural Kirklees as 1 of 3 charities for their annual community giving scheme in their Huddersfield Branch. We came second and we have been awarded £600. We will pass the money on to one of our full member groups. Applications by email to Natural Kirklees must be made by the end of January 2025 and details will appear in the newsletter.</p> <p>Future of Natural Kirklees</p>	

<p>We have had to look for help beyond the Trustees and we asked EPIKS if they will consider taking on some of our admin work. EPIKS have produced a proposal that the trustees have approved, and EPIKS will provide 120 hours admin support over the coming year. The contract will be reviewed after 3 months. We will attempt to fund this separately from the Council grant.</p>	
<p>Date of the Next Meeting Will be Tuesday 11th March 2025 at 1pm held at the University of Huddersfield in the Oastler Building (OA7/26).</p>	