



Tees Valley Biodiversity Partnership

Partnership Bulletin December 2011

Welcome to our e-bulletin which is a signposting to local, regional and national biodiversity news, information and publications I hope you find it useful!

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Local Nature Partnership update Successful bid from TVBP for capacity building fund

Very welcome news at last! We have been successful in our application to Defra's LNP capacity building fund. A conditional offer of funding from Defra was emailed to the Tees Valley Biodiversity Partnership last week.

Local Nature Partnerships are a new initiative announced earlier this year in the Natural Environment White Paper. They are envisaged as being strategic partnerships of organisations that work to create a shared vision for their area and deliver integrated, environmental outcomes.

The capacity building funding is intended to help local partnerships build capacity to enable them to work towards applying to become a formally recognised LNP in 2012. The transition funding is a separate process from the application to receive LNP status. Defra say that "Applications for LNP status will open early next year and the first Government recognised LNPs will be announced next summer. Applications to become LNPs will be open to everyone and participation in the LNP capacity building fund is neither a pre-requisite for nor a future guarantee of becoming formally recognised as an LNP."

At the TVBP Steering Group meeting on 17 January we will be discussing how we will be using the fund to develop a Tees Valley Local Nature Partnership. Below is information from the Defra website on the capacity building that the fund can support

- Bring together the range of organisations interested in forming a Local Nature Partnership and develop common agreement about the way forward. Identify opportunities and priority outcomes using an ecosystems approach and define the linked benefits for local communities and businesses. Work collaboratively with a range of relevant stakeholders across sectors.
- Develop a new integrated environmental vision, or expanding an existing one across the partnership for improving the natural environment in a collaborative way that reflects its wider social and economic benefits, and the need to manage this in a more integrated, landscape-scale way.
- Expand the membership of the partnership to reflect a more **integrated, outcome focused** and **landscape scale** approach to delivering action that improves the natural environment.

Proposes ways to diversify the financial support currently provided to the partnership, putting it on a more broad-based and sustainable footing, by reflecting the wider benefits which a healthy natural environment has for social and economic priorities.

For more information on the TVBPs work to establish a Local Nature Partnership for the Tees Valley contact Jeremy Garside jgarside@teeswildlife.org

Visit the Defra website <http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/natural/whitepaper/local-nature-partnerships/>

Tees Valley Enterprise Zone and biodiversity

Here is an update by Malcolm Steele from Tees Valley Unlimited

Following the government's announcement that Tees Valley has been successful in its bid for an Enterprise Zone, Tees Valley Unlimited and the local planning authorities have been considering how a simplified planning regime could operate on the sites within the EZ. Local Development Orders - which grant planning permission for specified developments without the need for a formal planning application - will be applied to 7 of the 12 EZ sites. The remaining sites will have a Planning Performance Agreement - this is an agreement between the applicant and the local planning authority on the key stages, information and timescales needed to determine a planning application.

While it is hoped that the Enterprise Zone will provide a catalyst for new economic growth and investment, there are clearly concerns that the environment and wildlife habitats may suffer, particularly on those sites where a formal planning application will not be required. Tees Valley Unlimited and the 5 local planning authorities want to ensure that the Enterprise Zone and the simplified planning regime do not have an unacceptable effect on wildlife and the environment. Therefore early discussions were held with Natural England, the Environment Agency and RSPB to identify any site specific concerns on habitats and species so that appropriate conditions and guidelines could be included in the draft local development orders. A good example of this early dialogue is provided by the proposed EZ site at Hartlepool Port. Concerns were raised by Natural England about birds actively using parts of the Port at certain times of the year when ground conditions and business activity allowed. Natural England advised that this loss of biodiversity could be addressed through mitigation works to enhance the existing roost island within Hartlepool West Harbour. Therefore a condition for this off-site mitigation was included within the draft Local Development Order. All the draft LDO's are currently out for consultation until 23rd December. Final condition and mitigation proposals on the Hartlepool Port site may be subject to change as a result any responses received. For further information about the Enterprise Zone please email malcolm.steele@teesvalleyunlimited.gov.uk

Water for Life

Water for Life has just been published by Defra. It describes a vision for future water management in which the water sector is resilient, in which water companies are more efficient and customer focused and in which water is valued as the precious and finite resource it is. It sets out changes the government can make now to deal with the legacy of over-abstraction of our rivers; and reaffirms the catchment approach to dealing with water quality and wider environmental issues.

Headlines and download are available at <http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/quality/water/legislation/whitepaper/>

Cut and bailing techno wizards sought

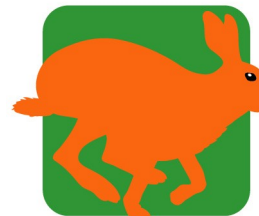
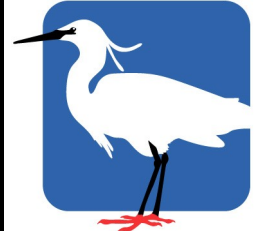
The Tees Valley Wildlife Trust are investigating investing in machinery to cut and bail small wildflower meadows on nature reserves, that can operate on steep slopes, be easily transported and operated, easy to maintain and economic to run. As this is quite a demanding wish list they would like to hear from conservation practitioners or anyone else who has technical experience of small meadows, any recommendations for specific models or brands and any other comments about operating some of the cutting and bailing equipment on the market for their advice. Contact Beth Andrews at beth.geo@gmail.com

UK Forestry standards published

A set of unified and updated reference standards for sustainable forest management in the UK has been published. The series of guidelines outlines the context for forestry in the UK, sets out the approach of the UK government to sustainable forest management, defines standards and requirements, and provides a basis for regulation and monitoring. There are volumes available on biodiversity, climate change, historic environment, landscape, people, soil and water.

They are available to download or as paper copies from the Forestry Commissions website at <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/INFD-8BVECX>

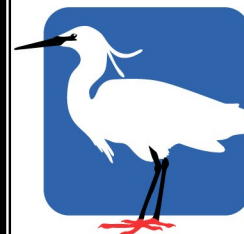
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Top Ten tips on funding from SITA Trust's Enriching Nature Fund

Here are our TVBP top ten tips when considering if this fund could help you deliver your biodiversity project. These are based on the experiences of TVBP members who have applied for grants in the past three years.

1. Ensure that your project focuses on a single UK BAP priority habitat or species.
2. Read all of the application advice before starting to fill in the application form; strong applications take time so ensure you have done this well before the application deadline and don't be shy about seeking pre-application advice from the grant staff at SITA Trust. The best way to do this is by submitting a pre-application to them (there is a 2 week turnaround on this so don't leave it until the last minute). This allows them to provide you with advice on compliancy, if required, and feedback on how to make your application stronger. The pre-application form is available through the following link: <http://www.sitatrust.org.uk/nature-funding>
4. The fund is focused on practical site based biodiversity projects. It doesn't cover costs for environmental education, community engagement, public access or general overhead costs.
5. If your organisation doesn't own the land where you intend to carry out the project, you will need to secure a 10 year management agreement with the owner.
6. You will need to have an 11% third party contribution. This is different from match funding.
7. SITA Trust are not able to fund work that is eligible for Agri-environment or Woodland Grant Scheme funding. This should be thoroughly investigated prior to submitting an application.
8. SITA Trust can only fund staff time if it is the main mechanism for on site delivery of the work i.e.. the majority of the role must be on site rather than office based tasks.
9. Consider the timing of your application - you project will need to begin within 6 months of the decision date (listed on the website) but cannot begin until a funding agreement is in place, a general rule of thumb is that it takes approximately 2 months from the decision date to get this completed.
10. Visit the website at <http://www.sitatrust.org.uk/nature-funding> The next application deadline date for 2012 is **27th February**.



Gloves off: scientists chart Chinese mitten crab invasion

Scientists from a number of UK research institutes are calling for the public to become nature detectives to better understand the full extent of the Chinese mitten crab invasion and the threat these crustaceans pose to our rivers and waterways. Anglers, waterway workers, boating enthusiasts and other nature lovers are being asked to identify and record any sightings of the alien species via an online survey. Chinese mitten crabs are now one of the most notorious aquatic invasive species featuring in the international list of the world's 100 worst invasive species. They are regarded as a pest because they cause damage to fishing gear and unprotected river banks, block water systems as well as compete with native species for food and habitat.

Current records show that mitten crabs have established populations in the Thames, Medway, Ouse Washes, Humber and the Dee Estuary. Sightings from all rivers and watersheds will be useful but researchers are particularly interested in any from:

- The Thames west of Windsor to beyond Reading
- Tyne, Tees and Wear in the North East
- Dee and Merseyside and the Severn Estuary to the Isle of Wight in the South West.

Nature lovers can [download your identification flyer](#) and report your finds by phone, email or online and upload your photographs by visiting www.mittencrabs.org.uk

Natural Connections 2012

Natural Connections Conference 2012 aims to inspire motivate and inform. It will be held in London on Thursday, 2 February. This event champions smarter thinking, co-operation and collaboration to help you achieve more with less across urban and rural landscapes and benefit people, places and wildlife. They invite you to come and hear eminent national and international speakers and leaders in their field from the public sector, NGOs, think-tanks, academia, journalism, radio and award winning TV.

For a brochure visit <http://www.dialoguematters.co.uk>

Progress on growing a green economy

One of the ambitions in the Environment White Paper is 'growing a green economy'. This aims to create more jobs through green growth as well as to protect our natural resources to sustain future growth. Steps towards this goal include the establishment of the Ecosystems Markets Task Force, launched on 23 November. Led by Ian Cheshire, Group Chief Executive of retail group Kingfisher plc, the Ecosystem Markets Task Force (EMTF) will review the opportunities available to UK business that could help them develop green goods, services, investment vehicles and markets which value and protect the environment. This business-led, independent, Task Force brings together industry leaders and experts from a wide range of sectors, ranging from banking and biodiversity conservation to beauty, to look for ways in which companies can improve both the environment and their own business. The Task Force will report back to the Government in early 2013 through the Green Economy Council. Read more at their website <http://www.defra.gov.uk/ecosystem-markets/>

Enabling the Transition to a Green Economy: government and business working together' is a new publication which sets out what the transition to a green economy means for business. It is the government's response to requests from the private sector for greater clarity on what is meant by a "green economy", the policies being put in place to achieve this and how they come together. There is a wealth of downloads on the subject on the Business Link website at

<http://www.businesslink.gov.uk/bdotg/action/detail?itemId=1096705244&type=ONEOFFPAGE&urlname=greeneconomy&urlparam=greeneconomy&ref=http%3A//www.defra.gov.uk/news/2011/08/05/encouraging-green-growth/&domain=www.businesslink.gov.uk>

Independent Panel on Forestry publish progress report

The Independent Panel on Forestry, set-up to advise the Government on the future of England's forests and woods, has published its progress report. The Panel says it is working towards recommendations that will increase the benefits generated from all forests in England, including the people that enjoy them, to nature and to the businesses that rely on them. The recommendations will be made in their final report to Government in spring. Read more at <http://www.defra.gov.uk/forestrypanel/reports/>

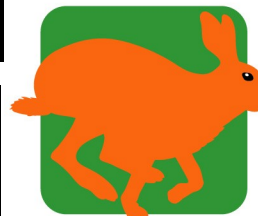
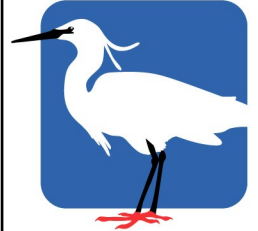
England Biodiversity 2020 Strategy Published

Defra has published Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services. This is the new England Biodiversity Strategy which aims to halt the loss of England's habitats and species. The strategy includes a commitment 'to halt overall biodiversity loss, support healthy well-functioning ecosystems and establish coherent ecological networks, with more and better places for nature for the benefit of wildlife and people.' It sets out four overarching outcomes: maintaining and enhancing habitats and ecosystems on land; protecting and restoring marine habitats, ecosystems and fisheries; improving the status of wildlife and preventing further loss of threatened species and increasing the number of people engaged in biodiversity issues. Download from <http://www.defra.gov.uk/publications/2011/08/19/pb13583->

New FC Director for the NE and Yorkshire area of Forestry Commission

In a national reorganisation of the Forestry Commission the Tees Valley is now in the heart of the merged North East and Yorkshire and Humber area. Crispin Thorn has been appointed Area Director for Yorkshire and the North East starting in January. Crispin was previously Regional Director Yorkshire and the Humber. He will start in January 2012 when Brendan Callaghan will take up post as Area Director SW England. It has also recently been confirmed that Richard Pow will take the post of Partnerships and Expertise Manager in the new Area team. Until further notice, please continue to use your normal FC contacts. The team of Woodland Officers will remain the same and we will continue to operate from the Rothbury and Hamsterley offices until further notice. In the Tees Valley we are pleased to confirm that Rachel Sparks remains our woodland officer for Forestry Commission grants. Contact information available at <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/INFD-6VMDZD>

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Catchment sensitive farming

Pollution from farming is a major contributor to water pollution. The aim of the Catchment Sensitive Farming (CSF) Programme in England is to reduce pollution from farming in surface waters, ground waters and other aquatic habitats, both in the immediate catchment and further downstream. The Catchment Sensitive Farming (CSF) project is a partnership between the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), Natural England and the Environment Agency. CSF seeks to reduce diffuse water pollution from agriculture by encouraging farmers to adopt best practice voluntarily.

CSF is operating in priority catchments covering over 46 per cent of the total utilisable agricultural area in England, either with support from Catchment Sensitive Farming Officers (CSFOs) or with support delivered in partnership with local organisations, called strategic partnerships. Its assistance takes two forms; a Capital Grants Scheme and training, information and advice. Visit the Business Link webpages at <http://www.businesslink.gov.uk/bdotg/action/layer?r.i=1083648966&r.l1=1081597476&r.l2=1082184851&r.l3=1083731942&r.l4=1083637700&r.s=m&r.t=RESOURCES&topicId=1083637700>

Decade of decline for Butterflies

Almost three quarters of UK butterfly species have declined in abundance over the past decade. According to a study compiled by Butterfly Conservation and the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology (CEH), even common species have seen a fall of 24%. It found that 72% of species had declined in abundance and that the distribution of 54% had been reduced. Researchers say the loss of suitable habitats is thought to be the main reason for the declines. For more depressing details visit http://www.butterfly-conservation.org/article/9/269/decade_of_decline_for_uk_butterflies.html

Trees or turf?

The Woodland Trust has published the report 'Trees or Turf? Best Value in Managing Urban Green Space.' The report looks at the real costs of maintaining grassland and compares it with that of various types of woodland. For more information, visit <http://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/en/campaigning/our-views-and-policy/woods-for-people/>

A Great news for grant awards to Heritage Lottery Fund in 2012-13

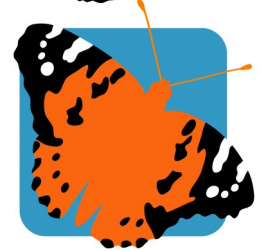
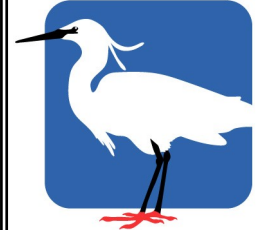
The Heritage Lottery Fund has just agreed an increased budget for new awards in 2012-13 of £375m. This budget represents an increase of £120m over the 2011-2012 budget and is made possible by the increase in the heritage share of good cause income to 20% in April 2012, and continuing record ticket sales.

A number of other changes will also be introduced, which respond to their recent consultation and pave the way towards the strategic plan for 2013-19, which will be launched next May. For more details visit <http://www.hlf.org.uk/HowToApply/programmes/Pages/Informationforapplicants2012.aspx>

The following will be of particular interest- HLF will be introducing a number of changes to programmes which respond to customer feedback, from April 2012:

- Committees will take local decisions on more Heritage Grant applications – up to the value of £2m (currently £1m).
- The upper limit for Your Heritage grants will be increased to £100,000 (from £50,000).
- The upper limit for Young Roots grants will be increased to £50,000 (from £25,000). It will also support projects engaging a wider age range of young people (from 11 – 25 years old) and the maximum length of a project will be increased to two years.
- Introduce single stage Heritage Grants applications *by exception* when there is an *urgent external deadline*, for example on partnership funding.

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Branch Out help from Northumbrian Water

Tees Valley biodiversity partners, Northumbrian Water, have a really useful fund called Branch Out that exists to help people deliver projects that benefit the natural environment and their local communities. The fund guidance notes and applications all look very straightforward. Also they say if it is manpower that your project needs, Northumbrian Water employees may be able to get involved via their employee volunteering programme to help your project succeed.

For all the details visit <http://www.nwl.co.uk/BranchOut.aspx>

Think BIG

Think BIG: How and why landscape-scale conservation benefits wildlife, people and the wider economy is a report, produced on behalf of the England Biodiversity Group, that explains the reasons for adopting a landscape-scale approach to nature conservation and highlights the wider economic and social benefits (known as ecosystem services) that this approach can provide. The report is published to coincide with the Natural Environment White Paper, and provides information relevant to local authorities, land managers, farmers, and local communities, in support of the Government's aspirations around landscape scale conservation. It is available from the Natural England website at <http://naturalengland.etraderstores.com/NaturalEnglandShop/NE309>

Catch up on biodiversity news from around the UK

Issue 55 of Biodiversity newsletter covering biodiversity news in the UK is available from the Defra website. They always welcome contributions of stories and photos. The deadline for the next issue is 27th January 2012. Download from http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/PDF/UKBAP_BiodiversityNews-55.pdf

The Big Tree Plant- Third round of grants

The next application deadline for this England-wide funding scheme is not until March 2012 so there is plenty of time to prepare your application. A new easier to use application form has been produced and clear information can be found on the website. For the application form and guidance notes for The Big Tree Plant funding scheme go to <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/england-bigtreeplant>.

Nature Improvement Areas – 20 areas shortlisted for funding

Twenty potential Nature Improvement Areas have been selected by Defra from over 70 applications. From these a final 12 will be selected for grant funding in 2012.

The Nature Improvement Areas (NIAs) Programme with funding of £7.5 million has been established as announced in the Natural Environment White Paper (2011). Nature Improvement Areas are large, discrete areas that will deliver a step change in nature conservation, where a local partnership has a shared vision for their natural environment. The partnership will plan and deliver significant improvements for wildlife and people through the sustainable use of natural resources, restoring and creating wildlife habitats, connecting local sites and joining up local action.

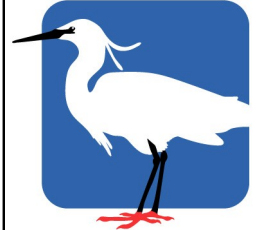
A list of the potential areas can be viewed on Natural England's Website- you may notice that there appears to be a regional gap, with no areas in North East England. http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/Images/2nd-stage-applicants_tcm6-28185.pdf

Some common sense on tree safety

Invaluable to anyone managing trees or woodlands in public places, the National Tree Safety Group has just published the "Common sense risk management of trees Guidance on trees and public safety in the UK" The Health and Safety Executive was consulted in the production of this publication. It endorses the sensible, proportionate, reasonable and balanced advice to owners on managing the risk from trees set out in the guidance. However it is refreshing to have this quote on page 2- "Safety is but one of the many goals to which we aspire; the mistake that is often made is to focus on safety as if it is the only goal" by Professor David Ball, Centre for Decision Analysis and Risk Management, Middlesex University.

Download the document at [http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/FCMS024.pdf/\\$FILE/FCMS024.pdf](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/FCMS024.pdf/$FILE/FCMS024.pdf)

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Yellow Fish in Tees Valley's waterways?

Rachel O' Sullivan has recently joined the Tees Valley Wildlife Trust as an assistant Living Waterways Project Officer, funded by the Environment Agency. For the next 12 months she will be working on raising awareness of diffuse pollution in the waterways of the Tees Valley. One project that she is swimming with is the "Yellow Fish" scheme. This water pollution community awareness project was piloted in Birmingham and has since been rolled out in the Midlands. It highlights the damage caused by pouring oils, paints, solvents, chemicals or dirty water down highway gullies or surface drains. These drains will ultimately enter watercourses and pouring waste liquids down drains can seriously affect local ponds streams and rivers. Yellow Fish is very simple. Volunteers mark fresh water drains using the Yellow Fish stencil and promote the meaning of the symbol in workshops, leaflets and poster. For more information contact Rachel by email rsullivan@teeswildlife.org

Local trees- price list from Butterwick trees

The tree planting season is in full swing so you may find the Butterwick Trees new price list useful. Butterwick Trees grow a wide range of young trees from locally collected seed. Visit <http://>

Environmental posts

We have been asked to circulate the following employment opportunities

Nature Ranger with Open Country

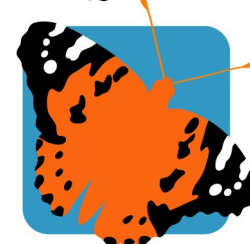
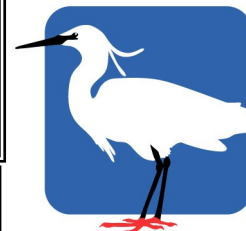
Open Country is a Harrogate-based charity seeking to enable people with disabilities to enjoy the countryside. They are looking for someone to help develop the work of this innovative and inspirational organisation. Duties will be leading two countryside work parties each week and assisting the new 'Wild about Wetherby' environmental education group. For job description and application details contact David Shaftoe, Open Country Project Officer on Tel: 01423 507227 or email info@opencountry.org.uk

Botanic Garden Volunteer Coordinator with Newcastle University

Full details available online at https://www15.i-grasp.com/fe/tpl_newcastle02.asp?s=tcEbHMjWuLXcZzLur&jobid=42971,7745236258&key=34133143&c=713456625661&pagestamp=sefujdhirrijzqkqxs

Area Conservation Manager with RSPB

RSPB are looking for an experienced manager to lead delivery of our conservation programme in the North East, Yorkshire & the Humber. Challenges and opportunities in this area are immense; coastal management on the Humber & Tees, marine protected areas, species recovery for black grouse, site protection for a suite of internationally important sites & species, advisory work for farmland birds in lowland areas and significant opportunities for wetland habitat restoration. Application details at <http://www.rspb.org.uk/vacancies/details/299277->



Next Tees Valley Biodiversity Partnership meeting dates

Steering Group – 17 January at Billingham Beck Visitor Centre, 10am
Wetland and Coastal Action Group – 10 January at Billingham Beck Visitor Centre, 10am
Rural Action Group — 27th February Nature's World, at 10am.
Minutes and meeting notes are posted on our website at <http://teesvalleybiodiversity.org.uk/library/tees-valley-bap-newsletters>
Thank you to Stockton-n-Tees Borough Council and Nature's World for providing meeting rooms for these meetings.

And finally.....

Fed up of too much telly, vegetating and trying to make conversation with relatives over Christmas– why not try these great indoor games– specially selected by your TVBP coordinator **Quirke**- While Quirke is as simple as matching colours and shapes, it also requires tactical manoeuvres and well-planned strategy (however in my family I always get the lowest score). Have a go at one of the **Cranium** board games. They get the whole family sculpting, sketching, acting, guessing and best of all there is no strategy involved and the clever people don't always win.

Tiddlywinks– much more fun than you would imagine. Play on the dining room table so that the grandparents don't have to bend down– great at getting everyone involved including teenagers and grumpy granddads.