

# Slaley, Healey & Hexhamshire Community Environmental Group (SH&HCEG)

on Wednesday June 15th 2022 at 6.30 p.m

**in the Hut on the Willow Plantation at the Quakers Hole wetland, Hexhamshire**

## 1. Present & Apologies.

Pat Wilson – Farming / protection of wildlife flora & fauna (Ladycross NR) PCs Litter / reduce plastic use.

Debra Taylor – Slaley Hall area, Slaley Councillor/ Village hall – quick win

Stella Douglas – Colpits area/Slaley Councillor/ Show/ Shop/ web site and community orchard.

Terry Douglas – Colpitts/ Slaley shop – native trees hawthorn/rowan/ash. **TD Treasurer**

Rosaleen Doonan – Village hall/shop/ musician/ Minsteracres - Raise awareness especially with young people

Peter Gill – Slaley Hall – community involvement/ stimulate a community effort

Karen Melvin – Ladycross Nature & Art - native trees at School

Carol Ferguson - renewable energy / energy efficiency & recycling

Anne & Christopher Porter – Hexhamshire (Chris - community orchard) **CP Chairman for 2022**

## Apologies

Sheila Borthwick – community orchard at Parks Side, Slaley..

Lynda Sale – Hollie House, Dipton Foot –

Joan Jewitt – Natural History & Ladycross NR

Peter Topping – Healey parish – community orchard

Slaley School **represented by** Nikki English (outdoor education),

Harriet Lamb – Climate Change /Slaley Community Shop

Vicky Young interest at Earth Day

Hilary Porteus – plant ecologist – has done many verge surveys in the region.

**2. Minutes of meeting held April 20th 2022 circulated pages 58 – 59. World Earth Day (Flyer), page 57.** Proposed as a true record by Rosaleen Doonan, seconded by Karen Melvin. The minutes were signed by the Chairman, Christopher Porter.

## 3. Matter arising

a) 3a 20/4/22; 3a 16/2/22; 3a 3/11/21; 8a 21/9/21 Creating Ponds. Quaker Hole trees. Emma Wright has produced an independent review regarding the 200 trees which had been planted across the bog. The trees are currently in safe keeping in the ground with C&AP. AP asked Hexhamshire PC for sight of its Management Plan to establish where the trees should be repositioned. Help from OS Ecology at Slaley and E3 Ecology of Wark were suggested to apply for tenders so an idea of costs could be established. Hexhamshire PC refused any help they wished to make decisions themselves.

b) 7 20/4/22; 10 16/2/22: Earth Day Friday April 22<sup>nd</sup> 2022

- (i) Short review. Anything to learn?

CF reported that the table explaining soft plastic recycling left visitors confused, they thought the information was too vague.

Tesco soft plastic recycling is via a large container opposite the tobacco/photography kiosks

Transition Tynedale failed to get the message out.

DJT reported 1000 flyers printed yet the message did not get out – the group needs to review its attendance policy and look for positive ways to engage.

PG was popular with his battery power stall. “Think energy” quote for battery!

No children or families attended. Arrange an event targeted at young people?

- (ii) Just One Thing list – any additions (SD to note)

Two people who made pledges have achieved what they set out to achieve (1) purchased a water butt and conserving rain water. (2) obtained a quote for Green energy. Medallions were given out at meeting for the group to agree ‘Just one thing’.

- (iii) Please bring your wooden “medallion” with the commitment written on it. For those not there, or there was no time to do one, A&C P have some spares. (CP to manage including ensuring everything is SMART.) Medallions were given out to those who needed them on which to write their pledge. Progress will be reviewed at a future meeting (19<sup>th</sup> October).

#### **4. General update on recycling**

Report PG: Blister packs the top product in Slaley recycle shed, followed by corks. PG to write something for Slaley News on Tesco recycle of soft plastics. Wiped clean plastic food wrappers, yogurt pots etc. Stella to do a new front web page on recycling.

#### **5. Treasurers Report.**

Report by TD: Earth Day income £200. No expenditure. Balance now stands at £442.

#### **6. Community Climate Champion**

report by DJT: Networking Event on July 7<sup>th</sup> at Humshuagh - DJT & PG attending.

Met Octopus Energy who said the company CEO would come out and talk to the group.

NCC Climate Change Team - Matt Baker & Nick Johnston grants from a £50k pot

#### **7. Template for Discussion**

CEG What do we do? How do we say we have been successful?

Interest people in what we do - how to get them signed up and involved. Have a stand at Slaley Show – engage with people – needs serious organisation - consider for 2023.

Vision statement: suggestions in red below

Inform on issues which influence the environment and climate change

Change attitudes

Take action

The group to look at this statement and gave suggestions. Any further suggestions to be given to CP for agreement at the next meeting.

PW asked why this was not our aims and objectives in our Constitution (unfortunately not to hand at this meeting). Reprinted here from the constitution document:

## 2. Aims of the Group

e.g. To work with the local community to make Slaley, Healey & Hexhamshire parishes a fulfilling place to live by focussing on environmental sustainability.

Typically, but not exclusively, this will be by helping people reduce their reliance on fossil fuels, reduce excess waste, improve the visual impact of the area and increase their appreciation for the local environment and flora and fauna.

## 3. Objectives

a) To cooperate with other organisations, voluntary bodies, and statutory authorities with similar aims. To create an information hub whereby initiatives are made available to the local community.

b) To establish working groups to focus on specific projects that support the "Aims" above.

Excel Spreadsheet with Activities and results – **attached as appendix 1/150622, page 64**

A draft spreadsheet was circulated for comment. The idea being to record what we have done and plan what we will do in a measurable way. This will be useful for newcomers and help us congratulate ourselves on the changes we have encouraged and learn from opportunities. The approach was welcomed. All to help complete. Action All by next meeting.

## 8. Verge initiative (A&CP)

CP introduced the idea of a verge project to involve surveying verges safely, an awareness session for those interested, communication to the community, purchase of CEG banded hi-viz waistcoats (double up for litter picking). A funding application may be required which would also serve to increase the awareness of the CEG.

The idea was welcomed. Suggestions made were that Hilary Porteus is a plant ecologist and has offered to help on this having done many local verge surveys. Safety on our highways is crucial and this has to be the top priority. Special verges with special flowers may benefit from a little protection. CP volunteered to lead on this with input from Hilary. KM also knew someone from Transition Haltwhistle who may be interested in giving a talk. CP to report back to the August meeting on progress.

## **9. The Wetland – history and why it is worth Protecting (AP – 10 mins)**

In 2002, three parcels of land were given to a community group by NCC. The group consisted of interested locals, members of the parish council and AONB staff. Dilston Hall used one parcel and the hut we are sitting in, the Willow group a second and the wetland area the third. Won a heritage lottery grant. E3 Ecology from Wark came out wrote a report and a Management Plan. Over 500 people took part in the history, archaeology, animal and bird life, dyeing with natural plants (nettles etc), dry stone walling, made bird boxes and built a bird hide made willow stars. Won an award. Dilston Hall college dropped out and the Willow group took over the hut. The name Quakers hole is taken from its history and position in the landscape.

## **10. Correspondence**

NCC Climate Action Northumberland April newsletter

12/5/22: NEECCo News May 2022

27/5/22: World Environment Day June 5<sup>th</sup> 2022 – part of the Platinum Jubilee celebrations so nothing additional this year.

Hexham Courant 19/5/2022 year 8 pupils Schools Eco club award.

7/6/22: Sent to our Chairman. it seems to be about a new regional network of local community groups and an on-line event is Growing Community Energy - sounds interesting I went on to register the June 21st event but all I could find was Wednesday June 22nd 9.30 - 13.30, it is free. I think this might be worthwhile and interesting. - have a look and we will discuss at our June meeting. Jonathan Mullard who is responsible for the governments net zero policy lives in Hexham

14/6/22: Festival of Nature 18/19 June at Talkin Tarn in Cumbria. Free entrance. Celebrating nature around the themes of water, woodland, climate and meadow.

## **11. AOB.**

**The month of July is Plastic Free July** – how do we raise awareness. Questionnaire on web site? Ask people to recycle something plastic for the first time – where to recycle. PG to put something in the July Slaley News

## **12. Date of 2022 meetings:**

August 17<sup>th</sup>. October 19<sup>th</sup>. CP offered the Hexhamshire willow hut again. TBC

## **13. Let's not forget - a local initiative –land on which to provide a community ‘something’.**

There being no further business the meeting ended with refreshments at 7.50 p.m.