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## Tees-Swale news January 2024



News and events from the **Tees-Swale: Naturally Connected** programme. Keep up to date with our posts on social media using the hashtag **#TeesSwale**. Join the [Tees-Swale Facebook group here](#).

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Welcome to the first newsletter of 2024. This January, we are celebrating the winners of the Tees-Swale: Naturally Connected High Nature Value Farming Awards. Winter is the tree planting season. We are highlighting volunteer opportunities to plant trees and hedgerows and at our nursery as part of the trees and woodlands project. February sees the Dark Skies Festival in the Dales and the Tees-Swale team are running events to help you enjoy the dark nights. Finally, we hear from our trainees as they enter the last few months of their traineeships.

Claire Hodgson, Tees-Swale Programme Manager

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### High Nature Value Farming Awards



Three farms have been recognised in the Tees-Swale: Naturally Connected High Nature Value Farming Awards. The presentation was made by Sir John

Lawton, chair of the Tees-Swale project board, last November.

Ray and Sue Ridley of Kexwith Farm, near Marske, were awarded the Best Practice category for their continuing enhancement of the farm, which has never been intensively managed, and its habitats. Ray and Sue said: "We are very excited that Kexwith should be recognised by the judges as being worthy of this award."

Charlie and Gina Parker, of Hill Gill Farm, Baldersdale, were the winners of the Nature Recovery category for their ongoing transition from a previously intensively farmed holding, and also the continuing care in what has been planted. Charlie Parker said: "We're very pleased and proud to receive the award, thank you to everyone concerned."

Jemma and John Clark of Bowlees Farm, Newbiggin-in-Teesdale, won the Public Engagement category for the volume of public engagement they have achieved since their classroom went in earlier this year. Jemma Clark said: "The recognition inspires me to continue to pursue my passion with even greater enthusiasm."

[Read more](#)

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## Volunteer opportunities



### Hedge and tree planting

Join us at farms in Teesdale planting hedges and trees for nature recovery on Sunday 21, Monday 22 and Wednesday 31 January, and on Monday 12, Friday 23, Saturday 24 and Wednesday 28 February, 10am to 3.30pm. All are welcome, but a general level of fitness is needed, and children must be supervised by adult.

[Find out more and sign-up here](#)



### Volunteer at Bowlees nursery

Help us with our nature recovery work on the last Wednesday of each month at the Bowlees nursery by sowing seeds, potting on and watering plants. The next sessions are on 31 January and 28 February.

[Find out more and sign-up](#)

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# Yorkshire Dales Dark Skies Festival



Meadow assessment 2022 (North Pennines National Landscape)

Make the most of the dark nights this February as the Tees-Swale team host events as part of the Yorkshire Dales Dark Skies Festival. There is a night-time run in Swaledale for the more energetic as well as a chance to learn more about the stars with local astronomers (weather permitting).

[Find out more](#)

## Event updates and trainee blogs



### Wild Wednesdays at Bowlees

Join us on 21 February, 10.30am to 12.30pm, willow weaving a fish mobile. Suitable for children aged 5+, supervised by an adult.

[Read more and book](#)



### Dark Skies in the vale

An evening of star-gazing and dark sky activities on Friday 23 February. Part of the Yorkshire Dales Dark Skies Festival 2024.

[Read more and book](#)



### Reeth Dark Skies night run

A 5 mile night run in the heart of the Yorkshire Dales on Saturday 24 February. Part of the Yorkshire Dales Dark Skies Festival 2024.

[Read more and book](#)



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[Read more and book](#)



### No such thing as bad weather

A trainee experiences difficult conditions whilst learning photography skills in Teesdale with local photographer, David Forster.

[Read more](#)



### New traineeships coming soon

Our current trainees will complete their year in May and the next traineeships will be advertised soon. Keep an eye on our websites

[here](#) and [here](#).

## Reducing pollution from abandoned metal mines



The first phase of two innovative projects to reduce metal pollution from abandoned lead and zinc mines near Middleton-in-Teesdale has recently been completed. The measures, which include building 300m of new riverbank walls and sowing an array of grass and plant species on metal-contaminated land, will limit metals being washed out of mine waste material and polluting Little Eggeshope and Great Eggeshope becks, both tributaries of the River Tees.

The two projects, with funding from the Water and Abandoned Metal Mines (WAMM) programme and The National Lottery Heritage Fund, are helping to improve water quality and restore, expand and connect habitats in the North Pennines National Landscape.

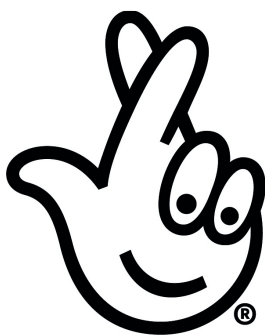
[Read more here](#)



### Join us on Facebook

We have a Facebook group where team members are posting images and updates from their work across Swaledale and Teesdale. Join us and keep up to date with the project.

[Facebook Group](#)



Made possible with

**Heritage  
Fund**

**Funding for Tees-Swale: naturally connected predominantly comes from The National Lottery Heritage Fund, thanks to National Lottery players.**

#### **Funders** (alphabetical)

[Arts Council England](#)

[Environment Agency/The Coal Authority](#)

[Natural England via the Countryside Stewardship Facilitation Fund](#)

[Northumbrian Water](#)

[Richmondshire District Council](#)

[The Esmée Fairbairn Foundation](#)

[The National Lottery Heritage Fund](#)

[The North Pennines National Landscape](#)

[The Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority](#)

[Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust](#)

[Yorkshire Water](#)

#### **Delivery partners**

[The North Pennines National Landscape](#)

[The Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority](#)

[Environment Agency](#)

[Yorkshire Peat Partnership](#)  
[Tees Rivers Trust](#)  
[Yorkshire Dales Rivers Trust](#)  
[RSPB](#)  
[The Coal Authority](#)

In kind contributions come from a range of partners including the Tees Rivers Trust, Yorkshire Dales Rivers Trust, RSPB, the Environment Agency, the Coal Authority, Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust, Visit County Durham and Welcome to Yorkshire.

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