

Tees-Swale: naturally connected



Leaving a lasting legacy across Teesdale and Swaledale



North
Pennines
National
Landscape



North Pennines
Global Geopark



YORKSHIRE DALES
National Park Authority



Introduction

Professor Sir John Lawton CBE FRS

When the board I chaired published *Making Space for Nature* in 2010, I never imagined I would have the chance to help to put its principles of *more, bigger, better, and more joined up* landscapes into practice.



The opportunity came when I was asked to chair what was to become **Tees-Swale: naturally connected**, a joint bid to The National Lottery Heritage Fund over 845km² of the North Pennines and the Yorkshire Dales. This is a working, predominantly farmed, landscape, and one of the most diverse and extensive areas of unfragmented, semi-natural habitats in England. The programme had two key aims; to support farmers to do even more for nature at a landscape scale and to help thousands of people to discover, enjoy and understand these special upland places.

After nearly eight years Tees-Swale has come to an end, and I've loved every minute of it. It is a very beautiful area, and to be able to spend time there with a purpose, to join with other people who have done so much to deliver the project, has been a huge privilege and given me much pride and pleasure. Thank you all who have been involved.

The scale of the efforts to deliver “more, bigger, better and joined” across this landscape is staggering and has mostly exceeded original targets. Peatlands have been restored and elsewhere huge numbers of trees have been planted and woodlands created. Hay meadows have been restored and enhanced, and habitats for breeding waders much improved. And many people have benefitted from time spent in this wonderful area.

I am pleased that so many farmers have shown that they can both farm their land and make space for nature. Teams in the Yorkshire Dales and the North Pennines will continue working with farmers and landowners to provide support and advice.

Cherish this landscape, its people and its wildlife. It is very special.

Visit <https://bit.ly/SirJohnLawton> for Sir John's words in full.

The impact of Tees-Swale

Delivering lasting change on a landscape scale

The achievements are substantial: thousands of hectares of habitat improved, hundreds of kilometres of watercourses and access routes enhanced, hundreds of people trained or volunteering, and thousands of people given new opportunities to experience and understand the landscape.

Restoring nature at landscape scale

The Tees-Swale programme has made a substantial contribution to improving the condition, management and resilience of natural heritage across the programme area. The partners have developed new approaches to some of the landscape's most challenging environmental problems. In total, the partners have delivered a landscape impact of more than 3,961 hectares across peatland, grassland, woodland and habitats for waders.

Giving people the skills to care for the landscape

There has been an important emphasis on practical, hands-on activity, turning awareness into confidence and action. Farmers, volunteers, young people, trainees and community participants have learned through doing - restoring habitats, identifying species, monitoring wildlife, planting, surveying and managing land.

Connecting more people with nature

Throughout the programme partners have worked hard to ensure that the benefits of the landscape are available to people who may traditionally have been excluded from environmental and countryside programmes. 18,900 adults and 3,600 young people were engaged through 388 activities and events. 190 km of Public Rights of Way have been improved, three farms have been supported to offer public visits and there are two new Tramper sites to increase accessibility.



Tees-Swale: naturally connected

Swaledale Teesdale

The programme covers **845 km²** across Teesdale and Swaledale



£8.5 million multi-partner programme funded by The National Lottery Heritage Fund

Based on the



more, bigger, better and more joined up

Over **1600 hectares** of peatland restored...

Reprofiling **33 km** of hagg edges

2,000 stone dams

120,000 cotton grass plugs planted

Over **60,000** trees planted

110 hectares of woodland created, restored and enhanced

8km of hedgerows planted

4 former metal mine sites improved

200km of cleaner and healthier rivers

1 fish pass constructed

Worked with over **200** farmers

230 hectares of species-rich hay meadows have been restored or enhanced

Worked with **3,235** children and young people, from over **100** schools and youth groups

30,000 locally-grown wildflower plugs planted

3,500 people attended **110** community events

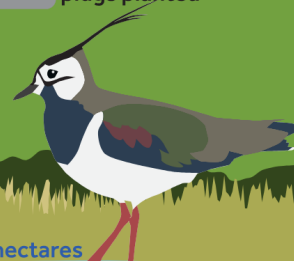
Guided walk this Saturday!

450 volunteers dedicated more than **6,700** hours to restore nature and improve habitats

19 trainee jobs created

150 scrapes created to support wildlife

1250 hectares of land enhanced for breeding wading birds



Learning and legacy

Relationships are fundamental to doing more for nature

Perhaps the clearest lesson from the Tees-Swale programme is that successful landscape-scale nature enhancement and recovery starts with people. Building trust with farmers and land managers takes time. Repeated conversations, site visits, local knowledge and co-designed solutions have helped overcome barriers and create lasting engagement.

“Through Tees-Swale, we have developed a different way of working that isn’t a ‘them’ and ‘us’ situation.”

The experience demonstrates the value of investing in relationships before interventions are designed.

Practical participation creates lasting capability

People learn most effectively when they can take part. Tree planting, meadow surveys, seed collection, habitat restoration, farm visits and wildlife monitoring have enabled people not only to understand nature recovery and enhancement but to contribute to it. Volunteers have become an important resource, developing skills in seed collection, plant propagation, bee walks, quadrat surveys, tree planting and habitat management.

Nature and people reinforce each other

This programme shows that environmental and social outcomes do not need to be separate. Restoration creates opportunities for people to learn, volunteer and develop a sense of ownership. In turn, people’s involvement builds understanding and support for nature enhancement and recovery.

“Giving people opportunities to take part in tree planting and plug planting or surveying meadows ... contributes to that sense of ownership, or belonging in the natural landscape.”



“Being a trainee was a truly life-changing experience.”

“I think the key legacy is the collaboration:

Learning and legacy

Inclusion means creating belonging

The experience of Tees-Swale demonstrates the importance of designing activities around people's needs rather than expecting everyone to engage in the same way.

"This has given me a new lease of life; I didn't think I would ever be able to visit these places again."



Creativity makes experiences memorable

Creative approaches - including Calling the Curlew, Creatively Connected, Stars and Songs, films, nature trails and sound recording - have provided distinctive ways for people to experience and understand Teesdale and Swaledale. People remember experiences that engage them emotionally as well as intellectually.

Through Tees-Swale the partners have created a platform for the next phase of nature recovery and enhancement: healthier habitats, improved watercourses, new skills, experienced volunteers, more confident communities, stronger relationships with farmers and land managers, and a network of organisations with greater experience of working together.

Collectively through Tees-Swale partners have not just restored and enhanced parts of a landscape, they have strengthened the foundations for its future and provided the capacity to keep working together.

cooperation at all different levels..."

Thanks and acknowledgments

The North Pennines National Landscape team and the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority have achieved landscape-scale impact across these important upland landscapes, thanks to the power of partnership and collaboration.

Thank you:

- to the farmers, land managers and landowners for providing space for nature, for their willingness to learn together and a commitment to sharing the stories of these landscapes with others;
- to the volunteers, schools, youth groups, children, and young people for their interest in discovering these special places; their commitment to sharing with others and their help to make these places even better for wildlife; and
- to all of the partners who have facilitated delivery and supported throughout.

This programme was made possible with funding from our main funder, The National Lottery Heritage Fund, thanks to National Lottery players. Thank you to all the other funders who have supported the delivery of this programme: Esmee Fairbairn Foundation, Arts Council England, Mining Remediation Authority, Environment Agency, North Yorkshire Council, Durham County Council, Northumbrian Water, Yorkshire Water, and Yorkshire Dales Millenium Trust.



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