Swinden Quarry Natural Environment Fund

Fifth Annual Report | 2024



Dwarf Milkwort from The Species Recovery Trust surveys in the Grassington area. Credit: Claire Bending

YORKSHIRE DALES
National Park Authority

www.yorkshiredales.org.uk/wildlife

SWINDEN QUARRY NATURAL ENVIRONMENT FUND (NEF)

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Background

On 20 December 2019, Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority (YDNPA) granted Tarmac planning permission C/23/67K for the deepening of Swinden Quarry near Cracoe and an extension of time allowed for the winning and working of limestone until 2039 (restoration to be completed by 2041). To give force to certain planning obligations arising from the consent, the Authority and Tarmac entered into a s106 Planning Agreement under which Tarmac: "*shall pay to the Authority on an annual basis the Environmental Contribution of £30,000 (Index Linked)….The first payment of the Environmental Contribution shall be made on or before* ***31st December 2019*** *and thereafter annually up until* ***31st December*** *2040*".

It is stipulated in the S.106 that the Environmental Contribution must be applied by the National Park Authority "*towards projects which improve biodiversity and quality of the natural environment within the Locality or which compensate for the actual or potential environmental impacts of the Development, with particular emphasis on the natural beauty of the landscape, tranquillity and air quality and riverine environment within the Locality*".

Tarmac's Environmental Contributions have been used to establish a discretionary grant fund administered by YDNPA for environmental projects in 'the Locality' that must benefit from any funds received from Tarmac due to the Section 106 Planning Agreement. The existence of the discretionary grant is advertised on the Yorkshire Dales National Park website at:

https://www.yorkshiredales.org.uk/swinden-quarry-nef

The grant guidelines, application form and a map of the area within the Locality are available to view and download from this webpage.

The discretionary grant is administered by YDNPA's Wildlife Conservation Team. YDNPA financial delegation regulations allow for decisions concerning NEF expenditure up to £10,000 to be made by the Senior Wildlife Conservation Officer. Disbursement of funds above £10,000 require approval by the Director of Community and Conservation. It is noted that under the s106: "*within one month of the due date for payment of the Environmental Contribution by Tarmac the Authority shall provide Tarmac with annual reports setting out how monies received as part of the Environmental Contribution have been spent (or allocated) over the preceding 12-month period*".

This report has been prepared in partial fulfilment of the National Park Authority's obligations under the s106 Agreement. It covers the period 1st January 2024 to 31st December 2024.

Activity in 2024

During 2024 the Authority dealt with 11 enquiries regarding the NEF from individuals and organisations interested in obtaining funding. Nine applicants were offered discretionary grants and all offers were accepted by the organisations that applied. A summary of the expenditure from the NEF is given in Table 1 below.

Appendix 1 showcases two community projects: Hedmann Conservation Trust clean-up on Eller Beck in Linton, and Threapland Beck Gill Farm woodland, a successful application from 2023. 12-Month Progress Update Reports from other successful applications are included in Appendix 2.

Last year, £13,560 of the Swinden Quarry NEF was used to commission Bowland Ecology to undertake habitat and watercourse surveys and reporting in the Linton area. This summer the findings of these surveys were made available to landowners in the area and will facilitate many new project ideas for enhancing the biodiversity and quality of the riverine environment.

Much has been achieved through partnership working and match-funding opportunities have been welcomed with, for example, The Aire Rivers Trust being awarded £9,600 to match-fund with £20,000 Lottery Fund to provide funding for a citizen science program called ‘Salmon Safari’.

Rachel Brindle (Wildlife Conservation Officer) 06/12/2024

Table 1: Discretionary Grants from Swinden Quarry NEF as at 14/12/2024

ITEM	APPLICANT / ORGANISATION	AMOUNT
"Encouraging Nature to Thrive" project, building on past success of habitat creation, planting of a new forage hedge, a natural willow dome bird hide and shelter, native woodland flower planting, and wildlife monitoring equipment.	A Box, Holme Grown Eastby	£5,200
Citizen Science program enabling volunteers to record habitat value and opportunity to work with landowners, along Haw Beck and other tributaries around Gargrave such as Easby and Eshton Beck, and Riverfly monitoring.	S Watts Aire Rivers Trust	£9,600
Project to plant a mixed species hedge with range of trees interspersed, 1.5m wide and 170m long, fenced off from livestock grazing.	Joe Midgley Linton Parish	£2,000
Project to create and enhance a small wildlife refuge banking along the edge of Riverbank, Burnsall.	R Ramsden Riverbank, Burnsall	£1,500
Surveying/management plan and ground management for *Polygalla amarella* (Dwarf milkwort) - (4 sites in Grassington and 4 sites in Kilnsey).	C Bending Species Recovery Trust	£1,300
Project to create an area with typical British fruit trees and indigenous small trees, restoration of waste land to provide an area for wildlife, planting between 20-25 trees, along with shrubs and reseeding with grass/wildflower mix.	L Appleton-Hall Conistone with Kilnsey Parish	£6,400
Community initiative on three small sites around the village, point 1 planters for plug plants and wildflower seeds (alternative funding provided for wooden planters), point 2 small native orchard fruit trees, and point 3 small wildflower meadow on grass verge area.	P Biddulph Threshfield Parish	£2,000
£6500 Boundary work (fencing, walling, skip hire) £2000 Community Engagement (camera traps, rucksacks, stream dipping equipment.	D Mann HEDMANN Conservation Trust	£8,500
Small project planting 66m of native hedgerow and installing 66m of post and wire fencing.	S Carr Moor Green Farm, Threshfield	£2,000
	TOTAL EXPENDITURE	***£38,500***

Appendix 1 – Project Profiles

Hedmann Conservation Trust

The Hedmann Conservation Trust was awarded a £8,500 contribution towards managing some land at Linton off Lauradale Lane for nature conservation. The initial funding is being put towards boundary works including drystone walling and livestock fencing, to enable the landowner to move away from intensive sheep grazing. The aim is to move towards grazing for nature on wet pasture through the introduction of a small herd of cattle grazing part year after ground nesting birds have fledged. The cow grazing and trampling will create structural diversity and benefit waders such as Curlew.

£500 was awarded to hire a skip to clear plastic, netting and redundant fencing wire from the becks flowing through the nature reserve. Seven Dales Volunteers gave their time to this task at the start of November when bankside vegetation had died back. £2,000 was used to purchase equipment for community engagement activities such as wildlife camera trapping, freshwater stream dipping and wildlife patrols/safaris for school aged children to take place once the nature reserve has established.



Two Dales Volunteers clearing debris from Eller Beck.

Threapland Beck Gill Farm Woodland

This area of upland mixed ash woodland has been set aside by the owner as a wildlife refuge and has good connectivity with the adjacent unploughed lower field, which is a fantastic location for spotting grassland waxcap fungi in late autumn before the frosts. The woodland floor, covered in wildflowers including ancient woodland indicators, is situated on both sides of a steeply sloping gill, and as such is ideal as a refuge for wildlife with its source of freshwater. Threapland Beck flows from a moorland spring and out of a small cave at the upper end of the woodland. It winds its way through the bottom of the gill and out of the woodland and beyond, through species-rich wetland wildflower meadow and open wooded riparian habitat.

The Project was initiated because of a need to re-fence due to storm damage in order to keep livestock in the adjacent field and out of the gill. Several huge tree specimens had been naturally uprooted across the fence line and these needed to be logged up and left in situ as rotting dead timber and brash piles to increase the availability of habitat for invertebrates. The management regime going forwards is to allow for natural tree regeneration within the woodland but some saplings have been planted up close inside the top fence line and holly planted further down in the gill to provide a denser shrub layer. Plastic tree shelters have been removed from established trees in woodland below Thorpe Lane by a team of Dales Volunteers and collected for the recycling scheme.



Logged timber from storm damage, left in situ to provide deadwood habitats for invertebrates.

Hetton Waste and Wash Dub Project

Report from Hetton Parish to the Natural Environment Fund and Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority

November, 2024



Watercolour after renovation and clearance work of the Wash Dub walls and gates
By Andew Forman Hetton resident and team member

Project Aims

The overall aim has been to renovate the area within and surrounding Hetton Wash Dub and Waste to uncover and restore the old Wash Dub structures and to improve and preserve key plant and wildlife habitats within the Waste and along the margins of Skirse Gill Beck. As part of this, the restorations have sought to highlight the historic nature of the well-preserved Wash Dub and make the area both a thriving and attractive natural resource and an amenity for local residents and visitors alike, with much needed drainage and an improved entrance to enable general and disabled access.

Project Funding

Funding has been secured from three sources:

£2,400 (+VAT) from the **Natural Environmental Fund,** financed by Tarmac and managed by the YDNPA, for intrusive vegetation and tree clearance, the purchase of the bench and interpretation board and a wildflower planting scheme.

£1,108 in 2023 from the **Cracoe and Rylstone Community Fund** for additional drainage that proved necessary plus **£1,576** in autumn 2024 for fixing the bench and board and for clearing, tidying and chipping the area immediately outside the main gate into the Waste to further improve the access and appearance.

£2,328 from **Hetton Parish Meeting** for major drainage pipes and stabilisation work in the Waste and **£1,764** for new gates. A budget of **£663** was allowed in the 2024 Parish accounts for grass/vegetation cutting and removal of the cut material and this will be continued into future years.

A total of **£9,839** has thus been spent on the renovation work to date.

Work Undertaken

Since the initiative began in 2023, and in line with our funding agreements and project plan (given in Appendix 1), **we have during 2023:**

- Inserted a major drainage pipe from the main gate down an existing spring channel to Hetton Beck, plus a subsidiary drain. As shown in Appendix 2, these have been largely successful in draining the bulk of the water from the gateway area and the front part of the Waste, but more drainage has proved necessary. Quarry bottoms have been used to stabilise the entrance and gateway area and cover the drain.

- Replaced the main gate into the Waste and three small gates leading into, and within, the sheep folds of the Dub.



- On the advice of our tree surgeons, felled the goat willow which had invaded the Wash Dub masonry on the far side of the Beck and removed other invasive bushes interfering with the walls.

- Removed all the other vegetation invading and masking the original Wash Dub stonework and power-washed all the masonry. This has revealed the full extent of Hetton's Wash Dub structures and some previously hidden features as shown in the lovely painting above by Andrew Forman and in the photographs below.





- Undertaken a programme of mowing to curtail the butterbur and ground elder in the main part of the Waste and to allow the grass and wildflowers here to re-emerge. So far, this has been successful, but it needs an on-going approach.

- Purchased an all-seasons Bench (similar to others in the Parish) so that people can enter the Waste, relax and view the Wash Dub and wildlife here.

- Taken delivery of an Interpretation Board, produced by the Heritage Team of the NYNPA Heritage team, which describes the Wash Dub, displays an old

photograph of sheep washing in action and identifies some of the animals, birds and plants that can be seen here.

- In consultation with the YDNPA, drawn up a planting scheme for an area of native flowers in the Waste and purchased the plants. We have also purchased two wild roses for planting by the roadside wall, been given holly and cherry saplings by a Hetton resident and have a cutting of the honeysuckle that originally grew in the Wash Dub.

- Implemented the mowing and strimming maintenance plan for the different areas of the Waste. See Appendix 1.

The following tasks have been undertaken in 2024 to complete the renovation:

- Undertaken further drainage work to channel away the water from the small spring lines emerging from the fence behind the Waste and from the wall and gateway area outside the Waste which were causing continuing wetness and access issues. See photographs in Appendix 2.



- Cleared, tidied and chipped the area immediate outside the main gate into the Waste to further improve its appearance and access.



- Placed the Bench and Interpretation Board in the Waste, with appropriate bases and support.





- Purchased and planted suitable low-lying wildflowers (primroses, dog violets, birds-eye speedwell, self-heal, birds foot trefoil etc.) on the sunny bank above the stream. Now that the butterbur has been cut down, other wildflowers have emerged here. Planted a wild dog rose, briar rose and, now-thriving, cutting from the old honeysuckle in the Wash Dub by the road-side wall and some wild foxgloves by the back fence. There is on-going work to ensure that they all thrive and are supplemented as necessary.





Wild primroses, dog violets, speedwell, self-heal and birdsfoot trefoil



Dog rose, briar rose and honeysuckle

- Continued the mowing and strimming maintenance plan for the different areas of the Waste, including further clearance of vegetation around the Wash Dub masonry as per Project Plan in Appendix 1.

Our two remaining tasks, apart from on-going maintenance, are to place a sign on the gate inviting people to come into Hetton Waste and see the wildlife here and learn more about our Wash Dub and to hold an event for village residents and sponsors in Spring, 2025 to celebrate the renovations and introduce them to the lovely features of the area.



Wash Dub Project team, 18 November 2024
Rear: David Mander (chair), Andrew Forman,
Front: Helen Jackson, Sheila Stoney (project leader) and Hilda Wellock

The Project Team would like to thank our sponsors of this project:

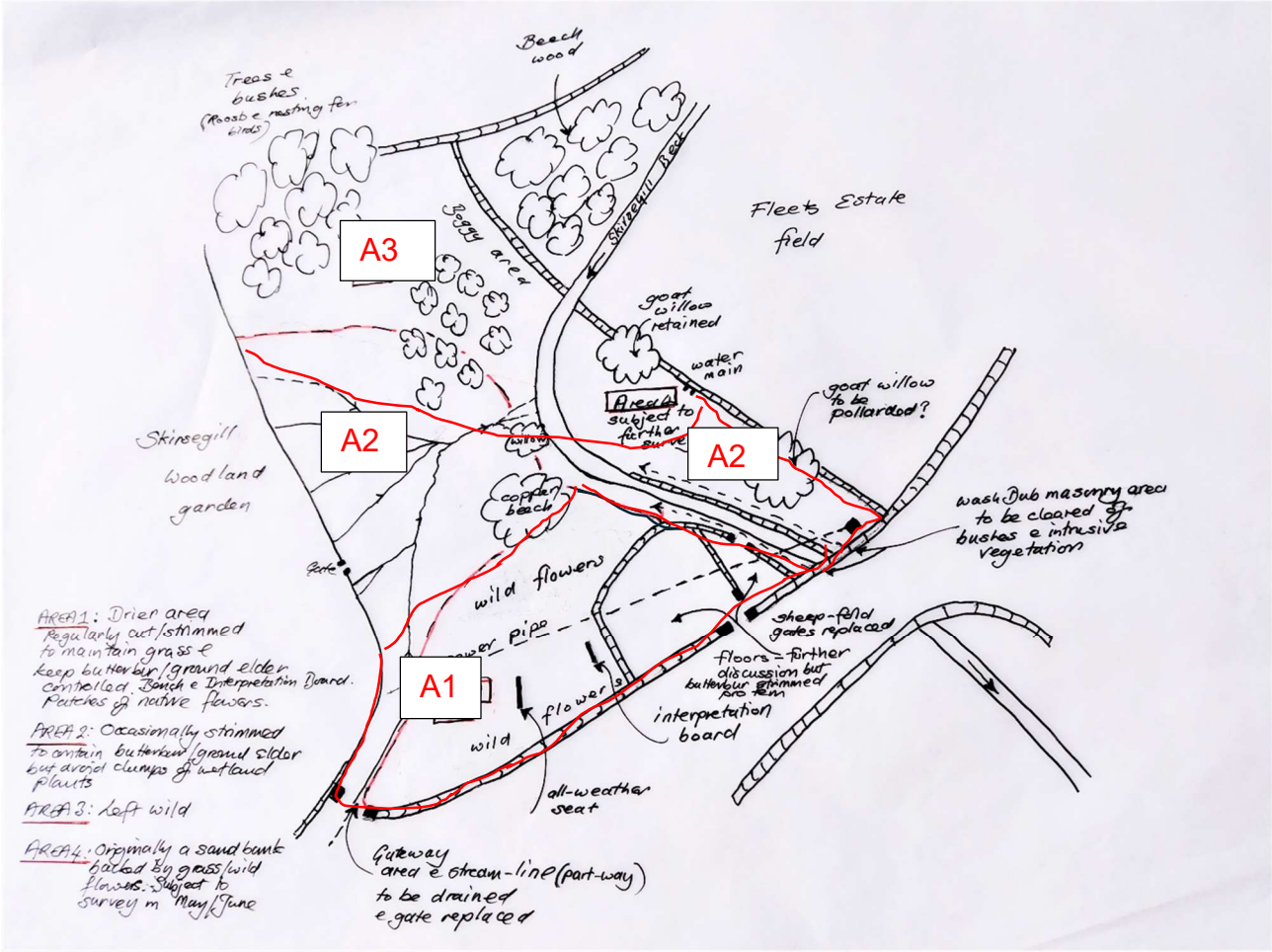
- The Natural Environment Fund and the Yorkshire Dales National Park
- Rylstone and Cracoe Community Fund (which also covers Hetton)
- Hetton Parish meeting and residents.

for their generous financial contributions.

We would like to acknowledge the on-going support and advice of the YDNPA officers, especially Rachel Brindle, and Janet Keighley, our parish clerk. We would also like to thank our contractors, Chris Benson for completing the difficult drainage work, Treetops Forestry for tree and bush removal and James and Michael Apreda for clearing the Wash Dub masonry, fixing the bench and panel and maintaining the Waste and Wash Dub area as per our management plan.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Project Plan



Differently managed areas:

A1: Frequent cutting and strimming in the season to keep grass low and butterbur and ground elder under control. The wildflower area is strimmed only after flowers have died back.

A2: Areas subject to periodic strimming and clearance. Area on LHS of beck is strimmed about 4 times in the season. Area 2 across the beck, and including the Wash Dub masonry area, is usually cleared once a year.

A3: Wildlife and wild vegetation area is left largely untouched.

Appendix 2: Drainage Photographs



Photos of Hetton Waste and entrance gate before drainage 2022



After the main and auxiliary drains were inserted and continued wetness from springs



After area has dried out. (NB the drainage work uncovered a large limestone boulder, possibly a glacial erratic, which is now a feature in the Waste).

Holme Grown Eastby

SQ-NEF Report 2024

I have attached some photos for you to use - our main focus was to make sure our 'wild area' was fenced off and allowed to remain relatively undisturbed. You can see that we had groups of volunteers help with the work. The fencing looks great. We also planted wildflower plugs, earlier this year and added extra 'berry' hedging plants. I intend to add some blackberries that we have propagated too. We've enhanced the wildlife pond area and also built a number of willow structures with our volunteers.

Thank you so much for your continued support.

Abby Box
Project Co-ordinator









Riverbank Burnsall Woodland Nature Refuge



I thought you might like a quick progress update. The dead-hedge is in place and we're absolutely delighted with it!

Next up will be the bird boxes and the wildflowers.

R Ramsden, Project Coordinator