

## Water Environment Improvements Project Evidence Form

### Scope & Purpose

This form is to be used by the external Water Environment Governance Group (WEGG), to review, validate and formally approve the length of bluespaces improved for the Water Environment Improvements ODI. The form will be completed by the Water Environment Team with support from project partners and presented to the WEGG. After formal approval, the km of water environment improved will be recorded against the ODI and projects will be marked as completed on the Water Environment Scorecard and illustrated as delivered in the Bluespaces Mapping Portals.

### Project Name

Caring for Crimdon Dene

### Project Lead

Company/ Organisation	Named Lead	Position	Contact Details
Louise Harrington / Alex Kaars-Sijpesteijn	SeaScapes / Heritage Coast	Beach Care Officer/ SeaScapes Programme Manager	louise.harrington@durham.gov.uk a.kaarssijpesteijn@durham.gov.uk

### Bluespaces Improved

Year	Claimed	Proposed	Reason For Any Change
Year 4	3.3 km	3.3 km	NA

### Water Environment Assurance

This project has been reviewed internally to ensure it has delivered benefits above and beyond our baseline and regulatory obligations to improve the water environment accessible to customers across at least two out of three aspects. Following our assurance process, the project was approved by both our internal and external groups for review before delivery. This form presents evidence of project completion and the outputs achieved, to request project sign off.

Level	Project Acceptance Date	Project Approval Date	Completed Project Sign Off Date
Project Team	February 2023	NA	N/A
Water Environment Steering Group (Internal)	February 2023	March 2023	N/A
Water Environment Governance Group (External)	March 2023	March 2023	May 2024 (For Review)

### Project Timescales

Candidate Project Approved	Project Initiated	Project Completed
March 2023	May 2023	April 2024

## Project Summary and Highlights

### Summary

The SeaScapes Landscape Partnership, Heritage Coast Partnership and NWG have improved 3.3 km of bluespaces through Caring for Crimdon Dene. This is the fourth project to be delivered linked to the SeaScapes programme, in which NWG is a partner investing £370K in the Beach Care and Aware project and the Beach Care Officer role to support coastal environment activities across the Tyne-Tees area from 2021-2025.

Crimdon Dene is located between Blackhall Rocks and Hartlepool on the A1086 Durham coast road. Crimdon Beck runs through Crimdon Dene and discharges into the sea near Crimdon. The stream flows directly on to Crimdon beach, an important breeding ground for the Little Tern, one of Britain's rarest sea birds, as well as providing coastal habitat for other birds including Ringed Plover and Oyster Catchers. The Dene comprises steep sided woodland and is a designated local nature reserve. This project forms part of a wider SeaScapes/Heritage Coast partnership scheme to improve access and interpretation along Crimdon promenade and from the Dunes café.

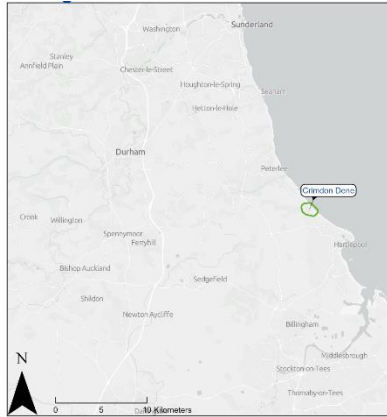
Through this Bluespaces project, community awareness of the local water environment, and access and habitats around Crimdon Dene have all been improved. Installation of new seating and work to clear and protect pathways has made the site more accessible, and the removal of litter has made the Dene much more appealing to visit. Public events have engaged the local community and visitors with the Dene, promoting it as an attractive option for local recreation alongside the coastal beaches.

### Highlights

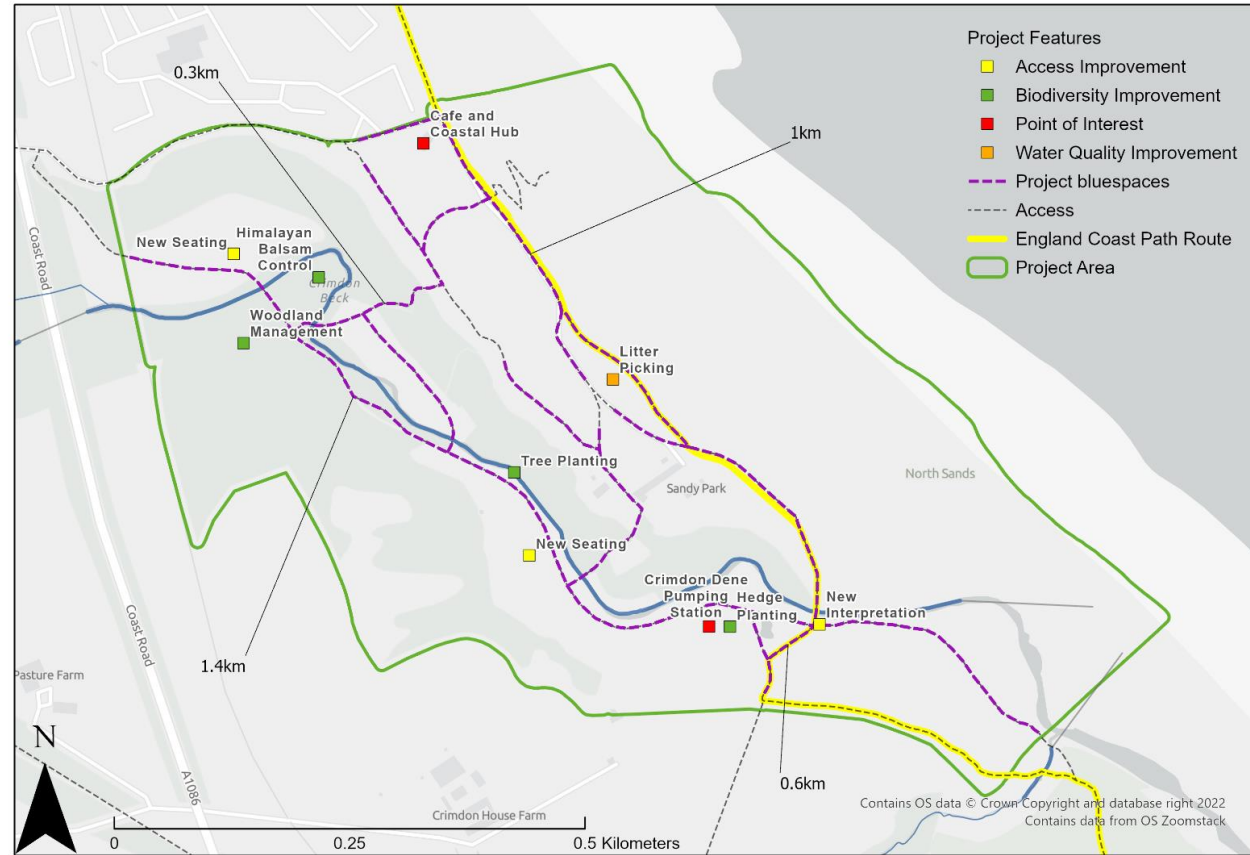
- 300 trees have been planted across Crimdon Dene by local school children and Northumbrian Water staff.
- Approximately 100 bags of litter have been collected in the Dene and along the coastal stretch by 350 volunteers.
- A site map for visitors has been produced to be used on interpretation boards and leaflets distributed in the café to promote the circular walk.
- Public events have attracted approximately 400 people and raised awareness of Crimdon Dene.



Maps



Caring for Crimdon Dene



Total Length of bluespaces: 3.3 km

Bluespaces improved at Crimdon Dene, Durham Coast

### Project Value, NWG Investment & Impact

Total Project Value: 

£15,200
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Year	Bluespaces Improved	NWG Investment		ODI Reward (£7676/km)
		Baseline	Above & Beyond	
Year 4 2023/24	3.3 km	-	£5,250	£25,330 *

NWG has committed to reinvest at least 50% of reward received from this ODI in new projects, after programme costs. The company has already exceeded this commitment each year. In Year 5, the final year of the ODI, 13 projects are already in delivery through partners to improve over 90 km of bluespaces, representing £253,000 of above and beyond investment.

Income Amount	Funding Source
£4,500	SeaScapes Partnership – NWG Beach Care and Aware
£2,450	Heritage Coast Partnership
£3,000	Volunteers / In kind (estimated)
<b>£5,250</b>	<b>NWG Bluespaces Scheme</b>
<b>£15,200</b>	<b>Total</b>



**Project Outputs, Benefits & Evidence Against Criteria**

Access, Facilities & Recreation	
Expected Project Outcomes	Benefits
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Redesigned seating areas overlooking the stream and coast will enable visitors to enjoy the nature reserve.</li> <li>2. Footpaths will be cleared of overhanging vegetation and debris to provide safe access.</li> <li>3. Improved interpretation will encourage visitors to explore the dene and discover its wildlife.</li> <li>4. A circular walking route from the Dunes café along the promenade and through the dene will link with the England Coast Path and help improve health and wellbeing for visitors. Themed guided walks through the dene and coast will also be offered.</li> <li>5. As more people use the area and its value to the community increases, anti-social behaviour will be reduced. Good environmental behaviour will be encouraged through engagement with Neighbourhood Wardens and information days held in the café, to help explain the importance of the dene and coast and reduce dog fouling and littering. This will be supported by increased patrols through police community support officers.</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ A1: Increases access to, engagement with and enjoyment of the water environment</li> <li>➤ A2: Benefits health and wellbeing</li> <li>➤ A3: Influences positive environmental behaviors</li> </ul>
Outputs	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Some seating areas have been replaced with new benches. Existing seating areas have been improved through work to address the muddy areas around benches – the top layer of mud has been removed to expose the original pavement base. Additionally, primary schools have worked with a local artist to create artwork mosaics around one of the new benches to provide attractive resting areas for the public. The mosaics are due to be installed before the end of June 2024, with the new seating area already prepared.</li> <li>2. The vegetation overhanging the footpath has been cut back, and a tree next to the stream which was posing a risk to users of the footpath has been felled. Following some dangerous erosion around a new bridge, revetment work was completed using gabion walls to stabilize the banks and new fencing installed to protect the new access route.</li> <li>3. The designs of the interpretation panels have been agreed with Design and Print (an in-house Durham County Council service) and printing and installation is in progress. These are due to be installed in June 2024.</li> <li>4. A circular walking route from the Dunes café along the promenade and through the dene has been created and advertised on leaflets, online and on interpretation. Themed walks have been delivered, including a bird walk and count, cetacean watch, wildflower walk, a nature walk with school children, and health walks.</li> <li>5. Ian Goodwin who is the local community support officer has been a regular on the ground presence, performing patrols and helping to deter anti-social behaviour. Interpretation provided through the project and leaflets now available from the cafe are expected to help promote positive environment behaviours and increase visitor numbers to the site, which is expected to further reduce antisocial behaviour through greater public activity.</li> </ol>	

Evidence



New seating provided / restoration of existing seating areas / revetment work for bridge



Mosaics and bench area where mosaics will be placed

Volunteers undertaking Cetacean survey



Art event in the café, using pieces of collected litter

Volunteer survey for Marine Conservation Society



New interpretation panel design

**Wildlife & Biodiversity**

Expected Project Outcomes	Benefits
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The quantity, quality, and connectivity of habitats will be increased through tree planting throughout the reserve. Diseased Ash trees will be felled, and habitat piles will be created. Planting along the streamside will stabilise the banks and help protect the water habitat for a variety of riparian wildlife. Newly planted trees will also provide connectivity between both sides of the dene and will improve the conservation status and sustainability of the dene through increasing the diversity of species. Willow, Alder, Rowan and Hazel will be planted alongside scrub species such as Hawthorn, Guelder Rose etc.</li> <li>2. Himalayan balsam will be removed from stream banks, and walkover surveys will be carried out to identify INNS hotspots. Action will be taken to eradicate invasive plants and help stop the spread.</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ B1: Improves the quantity, quality and connectivity of habitats</li> <li>➤ B3: Reduces risk or impact of invasive non-native species (INNS)</li> </ul>

**Outputs**

1. 300 trees have been planted across Crimdon Dene to improve connectivity and resilience of habitats, which have engaged volunteers and local primary schools. 4 areas have been planted in total, including hawthorn and guelder rose to create a valuable hedge habitat. A site visit with the Durham County Council Tree Officer has been held to agree works to be undertaken to trees showing signs of ash dieback. Some of the trees have been felled next to the footpath but it was decided not to fell others as these did not pose a danger to the public and are still providing valuable habitat.
2. Invasive species walkover surveys were conducted early in the project, however it was found that the Himalayan balsam cover was not extensive relative to other sites, and the season for effective control had passed. Awareness with landowners and site managers has been raised through the project, and the extent of this invasive will continue to be monitored by Heritage Coast officers and the Durham County Council Clean and Green Team going forward.

**Evidence**



Tree planting and litter picking with Northumbrian Water



Planting with school children from Peterlee

**Water Quality**

**Expected Project Outcomes**

1. Regular litter picks and focus on littering will help prevent rubbish entering the stream and reduce the pollution of plastics into the marine environment at the coast.

**Benefits**

- C3: Improves state and function of water, including naturalisation, visual appearance, litter and odour

**Outputs**

1. Litter picking events have been held with volunteers over the winter of 2023/24, with approximately 100 bags of litter collected through 14 events, including Northumbrian Water groups. Volunteers also cleared litter out of the stream where it was safe to do so. Additionally, a beach cleaning station and water refill station have been set up in the café, to jointly promote independent litter picking for all visitors, while also encouraging the use of reusable bottles and cups rather than single use plastic bottles.

**Evidence**



Some of the beach clean groups at work on the coast an in the dene



Photo of the dene / Beach clean and refill stations now provided in the café



**Additional & Secondary Benefits**

Expected Project Outcomes	Benefits
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Tree planting will help store carbon and mitigate against climate change.</li> <li>2. The local community will benefit through the enhancement of an already popular dene, and the support provided for this area to be looked after as a place to visit and enjoy.</li> <li>3. This project will help deliver SeaScapes and Heritage Coast goals of enhancing the water quality of coastal streams, and work towards Durham County Council's Countryside Objectives.</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ D1: Provides resilience and adaptation to climate change and/or reduces the risk of flooding</li> <li>➤ D2: Provides benefits to local communities, the local economy or NWG</li> <li>➤ D3: Supports strategic project or investment into strategic partnership or landscape/regional activity</li> </ul>

**Outputs**

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The 300 trees that have been planted through this project will contribute to carbon storage for years to come, helping to mitigate against climate change.</li> <li>2. The local community has benefitted through volunteering opportunities, and a cleaner place to spend time in thanks to the huge amounts of litter removed.</li> <li>3. This project has helped deliver SeaScapes and Heritage Coast goals of enhancing the water quality of coastal streams, and working towards Durham County Council's Countryside Objectives.</li> </ol>
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**Evidence**

**SeaScapes Landscape Partnership:** <https://exploreseascapes.co.uk/projects/blue-future/>

See: [Beach Care and Aware - Explore Seascapes](#)

A New Café and Coastal Hub at Crimdon opened in February 2022 to provide a focus for coastal visits and facilities for visitors, this project was supported by SeaScapes partners: <https://www.hartlepoolmail.co.uk/lifestyle/food-and-drink/first-look-inside-impressive-new-cafe-and-coastal-hub-at-crimdon-beauty-spot-3572557>

**Heritage Coast Partnership Management Plan:** <https://durhamheritagecoast.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Heritage-Coast-Management-Plan-2018-2025.pdf>

**Durham County Council:** <https://countydurhampartnership.co.uk/environment-climate-change-partnership/vision-2035-eccp-objectives/>

This project fits into the aims of Durham County Council's Countryside Section and its objectives.

This project has also contributed to the Habitats Regulations Assessment: protecting sites that are internationally important for threatened habitats and species through diffusing the recreational impact on the coast.





## Lead Partner Quotes & Testimonials

*This project has been a great success involving a wide range of partners including Heritage Coast Partnership, Durham County Council (Clean and Green Team), Northumbrian Water and the SeaScapes Partnership. Local schools have been involved in litter picking and nature walks and an exciting art element which includes the creation of mosaics to repair and improve seating. Guided and themed walks have been successful, and participants have engaged with experts in birds, wildflowers, cetaceans and wellbeing. The dene has been made more attractive to visit as it is cleaner with repaired seating and interpretation on site. Using the café the project has incorporated sustainable values, such as introducing a Refill scheme and litter picking station.*

*This is a snapshot of what has been delivered on site using the valuable funding from Northumbrian Water's Bluespaces project and without the funding this project would not have been delivered to such a high standard.*

**Louise Harrington, SeaScapes Partnership**

## Other Supporting Evidence

This is the fourth project to be brought forward linked to the SeaScapes programme, in which NWG is investing £370K in the Beach Care and Aware project and the Beach Care Officer role to support coastal environment activities across the Tyne-Tees area from 2021-2025

This wider project has provided background resources to support all the Bluespaces projects developed for the Wear Coast.

More information on the SeaScapes project is available on request.