

Water Environment Improvements Project Evidence Form

Scope & Purpose

This form is to be used by the Water Environment External Governance Group (WEGG) to review, validate and formally approve the length of water environment improved for each project. The form has been completed by the Water Environment Team with support from project partners for presentation to the WEGG. After formal WEGG approval, the km water environment improved will be recorded against the ODI and projects marked as completed on the Water Environment Scorecard and Mapping Portals.

Project Name

Wilder Coast

Project Lead

Company/ Organisation	Named Lead	Position	
Tees Valley Wildlife Trust	Jeremy Garside Jacky Watson	Chief Executive Officer Wilder Coast Project Officer	

Water Environment Improved

Year	Claimed	Proposed	Reason For Any Change
Year 2	9.3km	11km	Original length of bluespaces improved has been revised to reflect 2021/22 project delivery Physical Improvements at Saltburn Gill will be fully completed in 2022/23 1.7 km has been carried over to Year 3

Project 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 the evidence of project completion and the outputs achieved to request project sign-off by the WEGG.

Level	Project Acceptance Date	Project Approval Date	Completed Project Sign Off Date
Project Team	August 2021	NA	NA
Water Environment Steering Group (Internal)	August 2021	August 2021	NA
Water Environment Governance Group (External)	August 2021	August 2021	May 2022

Water Environment Project Timescales

Candidate Project Approved	Project Initiated	Project Completed
August 2021	April 2021**	March 2022

**This project was initiated through Branch Out project and delivery started after Branch Out approval in April 2021

Project Summary and Highlights

9.3 km of bluespaces along the Tees coastline and associated coastal streams in an area between Redcar and Saltburn has been improved through the Wilder Coast Project in 2021/22.

Through the employment of a designated Wilder Coast Project Officer working across the area, a new focus has been brought to this coastline, harnessing the public's love for the coast to address a number of issues. This has included work to support the protection of internationally important coastal birds and their feeding and nesting habitats, engaging with customers and communities to promote positive environmental behaviours, and managing plastic waste and litter through volunteering, events, and social media campaigns. Project officer activity has been supported by habitat work and access improvements at two coastal nature reserves in the area, Coatham Marsh Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Saltburn Gill SSSI.

This first year of this project has established a partnership network and a core group of volunteers, contributing to positive environmental behaviours and habitat conservation. The proposed continuation of this project into 2022 and beyond will deliver lasting impact across this often-overlooked area of the North East coast.

Project highlights include:

- 1166 customers have been engaged throughout the project, through environmental activities and education events and the project has over 50 active volunteers.
- Promotion of NW's #binthewipe messages educating the public re unflushables, delivered in partnership with Marske Litter Action and local wild swimmers, surfers and paddle boarders.
- Weekend-long public "Wader Watch" (6th/7th November 2021) as part of the global event [Wader Conservation World Watch](#)
- Seasonal Events provided for visitors (*see details below*)

Best Practice Demonstration:

- Partnership working: a partnership initiated with organisations including: Marske Litter Action, FRED (Friends of Redcar), Coatham Heritage Group, Surfers Against Sewage, Wader Quest, Sea Watch Foundation, Marine Conservation Society, Redcar and Cleveland Council,
- Information sharing and learning: advice and resources shared from Yorkshire Wildlife Trust, North Sea Cetaceans Project, Seawatch Foundation
- Collaborative activities: support provided from NW External Communications team and Operations teams for relevant engagement and improvement aspects of the project, including Bin the Wipe materials and stakeholder events
- Driving behaviour change: all events have included "calls to action" for pro-environmental behaviours to help protect coastal and marine habitats

See attached documents for additional details related to project delivery, including:

- Wilder Coast Project Feedback 2021-2022
- Wilder Coast Photos April to December 2021

Please note the amount of Branch Out funding awarded (£5000), on which project initiation was based, was half of the amount applied for. This led to some aspects of the project becoming undeliverable in 2021/22. There were also unforeseen circumstances that have led to the delay of some aspects of delivery

Wilder Coast 2021/22 Overview

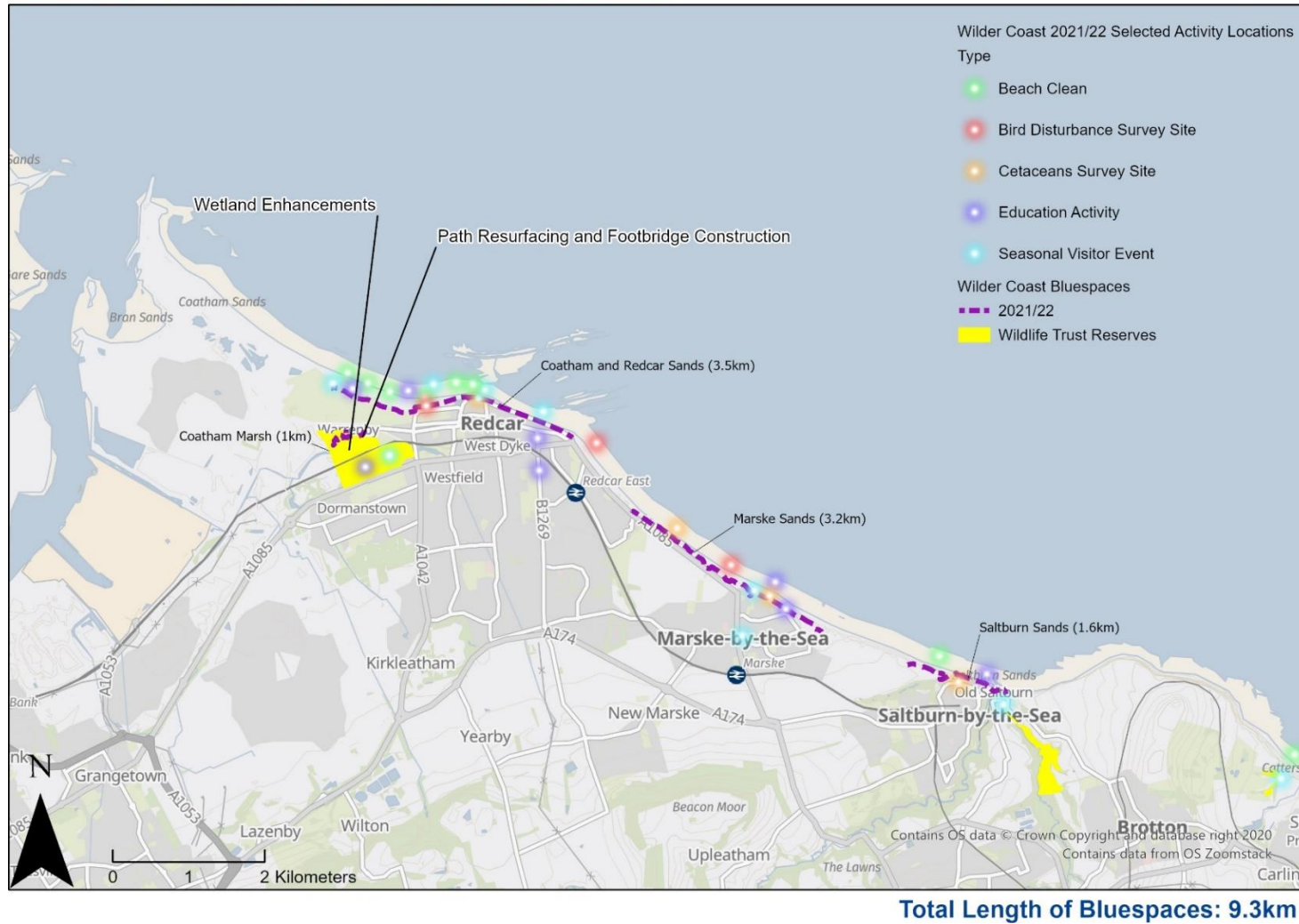
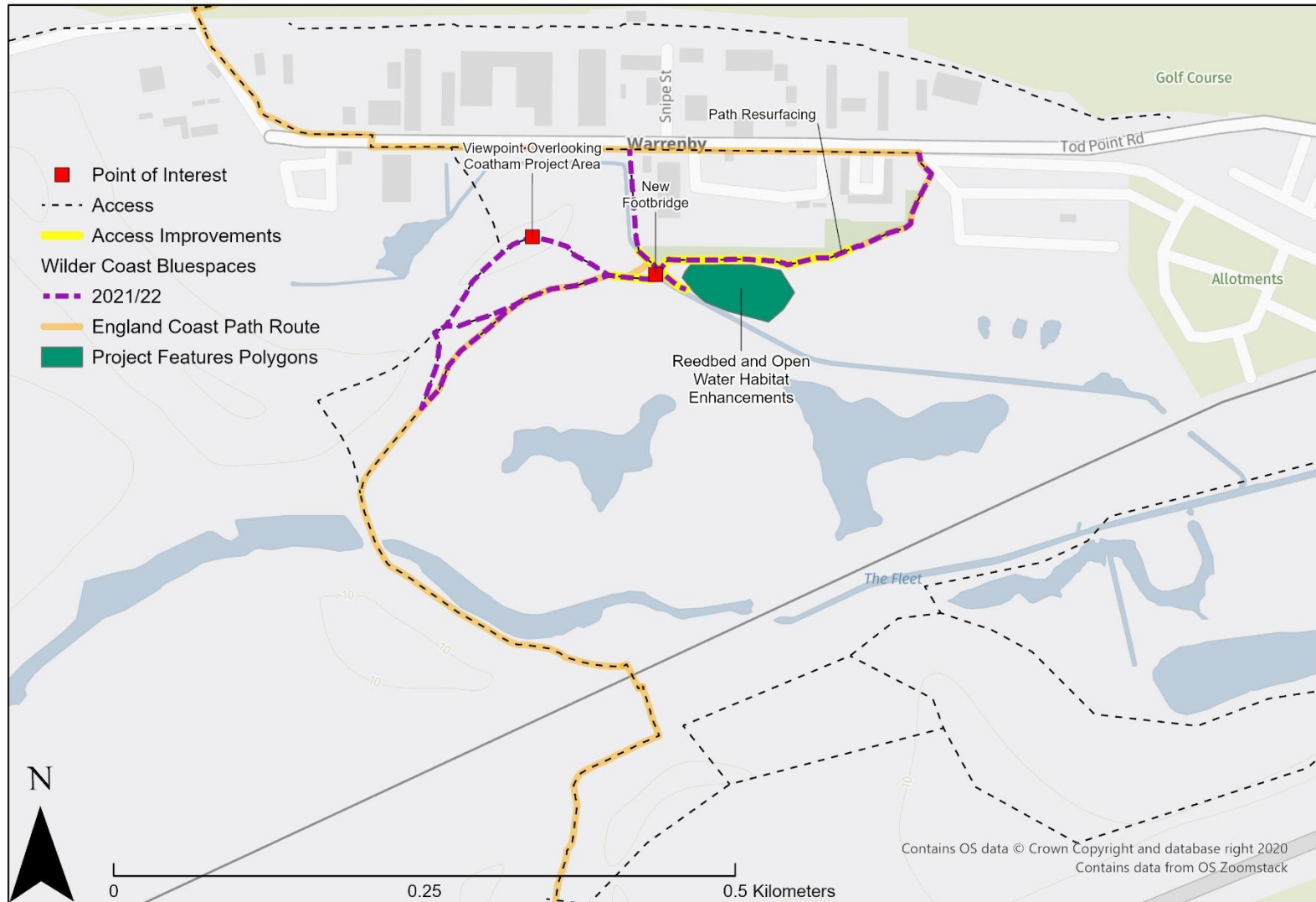


Figure 2: Revised map of activities and bluespaces improvements delivered by the Wilder Coast Project Officer and TVWT in Year 2

**Please note this is not reflective of all project officer activity (see details below) but represents the spatial focus of delivery and range of events in 2021/22*

Wilder Coast 2021/22 Overview



Coatham Marsh bluespaces

Figure 3: Map of bluespaces and project features at Coatham Marsh in Year 2

**Please note this site was also a venue for generic Wilder Coast events and activities*

Project Outputs, Benefits & Evidence Against Criteria

Access, Facilities & Recreation	
Expected Project Outcomes	Benefits
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Path and access improvements will be undertaken at Saltburn Gill* and Coatham Marsh, including step installation and reinstatement, path surface improvements, and boardwalk repairs. 2. Interpretation and signage will be installed to direct and inform visitors to Saltburn Gill and Coatham Marsh. 3. Wilder Coast Coastal and Wading Birds Officer will lead environmental engagement and education opportunities, including beach clean events, educational activities for schools and/or youth groups and events for summer visitors, aiming to reach 800 customers and establish a team of dedicated coastal volunteers, impacting on the health and well-being of participants. 4. Customer behaviours will be improved through engagement activities and social media, and Wilder Coast participants and volunteers will be asked to commit to personal actions on waste minimisation, water conservation and use of the sewer network. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A1: Increases access to, engagement with and enjoyment of the water environment ➤ A2: Benefits health and wellbeing through: ➤ A3: Influences positive environmental behaviors
Outputs	
<p>*Saltburn Gill work will be fully completed in Year 3 and is not claimed here.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. At Coatham Marsh, work in 2021/22 has involved the removal and replacement of a dilapidated boardwalk with earthworks related to the Wildlife and Biodiversity Improvements undertaken on the reserve. This has provided a new raised surface and takes visitors directly past the enhanced open water habitat. The surfacing of approximately 200m of footpath in the reserve has complemented this and the construction of a timber bridge has facilitated access over the enhanced wetland area. 2. Following consultation and due to the risk of vandalization and the quality of existing signage at the Coatham Marsh reserve, funding was redirected towards the purchase of aggregate to improve path surfaces on the reserve focused around the area of Wildlife & Biodiversity improvements. 3. 1166 customers have been engaged through the project, through environmental engagement and education events and activities. Over 30 events and training days have been delivered. The project has a pool of at least 50 active volunteers. A summary of the events and activities is included below: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Beach Clean Events: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 beach cleans including nurdle hunts, with partner organisations • 1 nurdle hunt • 1 online #lockdownlitterpick, with partner organisations • 5 beach cleans included in educational workshops and family events • 1 TVWT volunteer carrying out weekly beach cleans January to July 2021 for D of E Educational Activities for Schools or Youth Groups: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 workshops for schools • 2 workshops for Cubs and Beavers • 2 groups of young people Seasonal Events for Visitors: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 12 family events and walks, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A family beach discovery event for 25 families, run with the Friends of Redcar, and preceded by a training session for FRED volunteers on how to run public engagement activities. In addition to wildlife discovery, activities included beach cleaning and the #binthewipe message and pledge opportunity. Assisted on the day by TVWT Wild Coast Volunteers, One Planet Pioneers apprentices, Marske Litter Action, Tees Valley Nature Partnership and the Environmental Records Centre NE. 	

- A family beach discovery event for 30 Middlesbrough families from Breckon Hill Children’s Centre. Assisted on the day by TVWT Wild Coast Volunteers, One Planet Pioneers apprentices and the Friends of Redcar. As well as wildlife discovery, activities included a beach clean.
- Eight “discovery walks” at Coatham, Redcar, Saltburn and Skinningrove, for families and others seeking to be active in the coastal environment to improve wellbeing and fitness. Some of these walks were organised in partnership with the Mental Health Development Lead at Redcar and Cleveland Council, Redcar MIND and Carers Together, and it is hoped that participants will progress to become TVWT Wild Coast Volunteers. The walks were supported by existing Wild Coast Volunteers, with guest appearances from a BDMLR marine mammal medic, Marske Litter Action and a local artist, with the aim of showcasing different ways of being actively engaged with the coast and some of the people they can find here. All walks included pollution and #binthewipe messages and family walks included a beach clean.
- Stall held at the [Festival of Thrift](#), asking people to make #BintheWipe pledges, design their own selfie banners in used cardboard and enter a competition about the issue of marine plastic. 125 people did these activities and 400 were engaged in total.
- Stalls used to offer engagement activities around responsible dog ownership at local “Bark in the Park” events.
- Two ‘Flush Mob’ events: educating the public re unflushables, #binthewipe and the danger to wildlife. Delivered in partnership with Marske Litter Action and local wild swimmers, surfers and paddle boarders. Placards for the day were made by Marske Cubs and Beavers. Another good example of our coastal network in action.
- A small display is touring shop fronts in Marske and posters of one of the Cubs are on display in 5 community notice boards and shop windows, following the Flush Mob events. It gives a very local flavour to the #binthewipe message.
- Weekend-long public “Wader Watch” (6th / 7th November 2021) as part of the global event Wader Conservation World Watch, which is organised by the charity Wader Quest. This event aims to raise awareness of the global and local pressures on wading birds. 38 people took part, in 10 locations along the coast, including “social watches” on both days at Redcar. Social media interest was generated on community Facebook pages. The Wilder Coast contribution was featured in the [final report](#) and all participants were included in the Roll of Honour for the event

There are now several volunteer “teams” within the project, as well as others who offer occasional support. Allowing for overlapping duties, there are over 50 active individual volunteers in total, in the teams listed below:

- 5 regular Environmental Education volunteers, supporting our coastal workshops for schools, colleges and other groups
 - 30 active surveyors in Cetacean Team, carrying out surveys independently and submitting data to the Wilder Coast Officer for the North Sea Cetaceans Recording Project. There is, in addition, a small waiting list of volunteers waiting for the next roll-out of training.
 - 11 Ambassadors (16 dogs), who have pledged to avoid disturbance to wading birds and help us to spread the word about responsible dog ownership at the coast, by allowing us to share their photos on social media.
 - 8 Wader Team volunteers
4. All events have included “calls to action” for pro-environmental behaviours to help coastal and marine habitats, such as: correct use of the sewer network (#binthewipe and unflushables), pollution awareness (only rain down the drain, misconnections), personal plastic waste minimisation, beach cleaning and responsible dog ownership

Evidence



Coatham Boardwalk before and after removal, earthworks, and resurfacing



Timber Footbridge creation at Coatham



Wader Conservation World Watch 2021

Join in with Tees Valley Wildlife Trust's Wilder Coast Project

Our Wilder Coast project asks people to take simple actions to help coastal and marine wildlife. We are taking part in WCWW to support Wader Quest, a charity set up to promote the conservation of wading birds and their habitats. Waders face pressures, globally, from habitat loss, pollution and disturbance.

WCWW is a fun way to join people from all round the world to say "We care" about waders!

How to take part: no registration, no counting (unless you wish to). Simply go out and see wading birds during the weekend. Then tell us what you saw, where, and who was with you. Email: luckywithyourresults@teeswildlife.org Photos of you in action are very welcome. We'll send on local results to Wader Quest for a special newsletter with a roll of honour of all those who took part, including YOU!

Are you a beginner with waders? Don't worry! Our top tip is to start by spotting an Oystercatcher. It's one of the bigger birds, black and white, and you can't miss that smart red bill and legs. You might also see these birds on school fields because they love an earthworm.

Article in "Wild Tees" Magazine

Wader conservation world watch spotting sheet



Living Seas LIVE

In conversation with...

Welcome to Living Seas LIVE! Our new series of monthly Marine Watch talks hosted by our Living Seas team. Each month we will be joined by fantastic specialist guests to chat about the North Sea. It's wildlife and the work that is being done to protect it.

Next up we have Zosky Malton from Tees Valley Wildlife Trust talking about bird disturbance on Wednesday 19th January at 7pm.

When you sign up, you will not only get access to upcoming talks but can also watch previous ones. Highlights include marine mammal rescue in Britain, North Sea aquaculture and oyster restoration.

Please email livingseas@teeswildlife.org if you would like to submit questions beforehand.

Sign up below to receive information about each month talk, including live links.

Volunteer cetacean surveying

Living Seas LIVE: Wading Birds and Waggy Tails: [Youtube](#)

See attached documents for additional details related to project delivery, including:

- Wilder Coast Project Feedback 2021-2022
- Wilder Coast Photos April to December 2021

Wildlife & Biodiversity	
Expected Project Outcomes	Benefits
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Up to 8 coastal habitat tasks will be undertaken, focused on the coastline between Redcar and Saltburn involving work restoring sand dunes, upper shore habitats and soft sea defences. 2. Bird counts, disturbance surveys invertebrate and benthic fauna surveys will be undertaken at the most important wader feeding areas on the coast to monitor environmental concerns. 3. Habitat enhancement will be undertaken at Coatham Marsh SSSI in partnership with the Environment Agency and Natural England. This includes re-balancing the extent of reed swamp and open water habitat through the excavation of silt, reeds and roots from the wet ground with materials deposited on-site (0.3 ha to be improved in this project). 4. The increase in open water and muddy margins at Coatham Marsh will be of direct benefit to ducks and wading birds which are the main biodiversity attraction of the reserve. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ B1: Improves the quantity, quality and connectivity of habitats ➤ B2: Improves the conservation status and or abundance or distribution of species
Outputs	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Coastal habitat tasks will roll over into 2022/23 project delivery. Several sites for improvements have been identified in the Wilder Coast project area with Redcar and Cleveland Council and local community group. Detail is provided in the Wilder Coast 2022-24 Candidate Project Form. 2. Eight Wader Team volunteers have conducted a series of winter season disturbance studies (25 volunteer days between October 2021 and March 2022). Volunteers carry out disturbance surveys independently but come together for regular “sociable surveys,” which we combine with public engagement activities: talking to dog walkers and offering views through telescopes and binoculars. Wilder Coast Volunteers use methodology from The Wildlife Trusts’ Shoresearch suite of citizen science surveys. The surveys track change over time, and spatially to understand the distribution of important species such as invasives or indicators of pollution or climate change. These surveys have been developed as public engagement tools, volunteering opportunities and as networking tools for working with community groups and external organisations. The methodologies are robust and data from Shoresearch has been used to influence Marine Protection Area designation and is supplied to decision-makers, government bodies and environmental record centres. 3. In October 2021, over 18 days, hired plant, contractors, TVWT staff, and volunteers delivered habitat enhancements to approximately 0.3ha of silted reed swamp, re-balancing the extent of reed swamp and open water habitat in this area. 4. Wetland enhancements delivered have created more marginal habitat for ducks and wading birds. Toads have also been spotted using some of the cleared-out ditches. Additionally, the Wilder Coast contribution of observations to the North Sea Cetaceans Recording project will add to national data sets and develop understanding of the abundance, distribution, and behaviours of whales, dolphins, and porpoise in UK waters. 	

Evidence



Wader Watch Team



Ambassador 'Spike'



Common Toad using cleared out ditches following habitat works



Wetland/ open water enhancement works at Coatham Marsh

Water Quality	
Expected Project Outcomes	Benefits
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Beach clean events will be hosted between Redcar and Saltburn, and litter picking events will be organised to reduce litter in the coastal denes which also impact on the coastal environment through the stream network. 2. Water Rangers routes at Skelton and Saltburn will help provide awareness of issues, and routes may be expanded as part of Wilder Coast activity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ C3: Improves state and function of water, including naturalisation, visual appearance, litter and odour

Outputs
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Beach Clean Events: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 beach cleans including nurdle hunts, with partner organisations • 1 nurdle hunt • 1 online #lockdownlitterpick, with partner organisations • 5 beach cleans included in educational workshops and family events • 1 TVWT volunteer carrying out weekly beach cleans January to July 2021 for D of E <p>Further litter picking events in the coastal denes and streams have been carried out as part of the “discovery walks” at Coatham, Redcar, Saltburn and Skinningrove which are one of the sources of litter pollution at the coast.</p> 2. Existing Water Rangers in the Wilder Coast project area have been consulted regarding the proposed works at Saltburn Gill and it is hoped to involve them further in the future. Public engagement events have included Water Ranger themes such as raising awareness of the sewer network (#binthewipe and unflushables), and pollution awareness (only rain down the drain, misconnections).

Evidence



Beach Clean events



Citizen science



'Bin the Wipe' Flush Mob Event



Saltburn Gill Walk and Litter Pick and 'Bin the Wipe'

See attached documents for additional details related to project delivery, including:

- Wilder Coast Project Feedback 2021-2022
- Wilder Coast Photos April to December 2021

Additional & Secondary Benefits	
Expected Project Outcomes	Benefits
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Channel maintenance and habitat enhancements will ensure the flood water storage capacity of Coatham Marsh and help prevent flooding to properties and roads in the surrounding area. 2. The team of dedicated Wilder Coast volunteers developed through this project will provide health and wellbeing benefits for customers and improve the environment across coastal communities. 3. Project provides a foundation for further development of Wilder Coast and future partnership working and investment across the area, complementing existing strategic partnerships on the Durham Coast (SeaScapes) and in the Tees Estuary (Tees Estuary Partnership). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ D1: Provides resilience and adaptation to climate change and/or reduces the risk of flooding ➤ D2: Provides benefits to local communities, the local economy or NWG ➤ D3: Supports strategic project or investment into strategic partnership or landscape/regional activity
Outputs	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The wildlife and biodiversity work completed at Coatham Marsh benefits The Fleet, a connected heavily modified river system which drains 20km² of flat, low-lying land at Redcar and South Tees. The improvements help increase the capacity of the site to hold water in flood events, reducing the risk of surface water and sewer flooding at Kirkleatham Lane, Redcar and on the Trunk Road, Dormanstown; the two main roads in the surrounding area. 2. There are now several volunteer “teams” within the project. Allowing for overlapping duties, there are 50 active individual volunteers in total, and a handful of additional, more occasional, volunteers, in the teams listed here: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 regular Environmental Education volunteers, supporting our coastal workshops for schools, colleges and other groups • 30 active surveyors in Cetacean Team, carrying out surveys independently and submitting data to the Wilder Coast Officer for the North Sea Cetaceans Recording Project. There is, in addition, a small waiting list of volunteers waiting for the next roll-out of training. • 11 Ambassadors (16 dogs), who have pledged to avoid disturbance to wading birds and help us to spread the word about responsible dog ownership at the coast, by allowing us to share their photos on social media. • 8 Wader Team volunteers 3. A strategic partnership with NW is in development through this project, and other drivers for further projects and ways of working are in development for 2022 onwards. <p>In the continuing project in 2022, enhanced strategic links between Wilder Coast and NW will be built through Water Rangers, bespoke Just an Hour volunteering activities, volunteering alongside local groups, participation as ‘guest speakers’ e.g., in a walk and talk scenario, and by NW staff supporting at Wilder Coast events with other organisations.</p> 	
Evidence	
<p>See p. 9-10 for evidence of wildlife and biodiversity work at Coatham Marsh</p> <p>See p. 6-7 for evidence of volunteering activities and health and wellbeing benefits</p>	

Customer Testimonies & Media

Coatham Marsh Feedback:

Les (volunteer)

"I love working on projects like this. Getting to see the big machines on-site and feeling like I'm helping achieve something feels really good."

Janine (volunteer)

"Laying footpath is really hard work, but very satisfying to see how far we get each day. It's amazing how much we have achieved over the years, and not least here at Coatham marsh."

Member of the public

"I'm really glad to see the new path going in. I was worried that the path was going to be closed for ages, but they've really cracked on with it. The new areas of open water are great too; I've already seen some toads in the ditch that got cleared out."

Dan van den Toorn (Reserves manager)

"I can't tell you how much it means to be supported by our volunteers. Often these big jobs seem a lot to ask, with time pressures and lots of moving parts, but every time my volunteers pull us through to the other side. I have great confidence in every one of them and it makes my job so much easier to know I can count on them. Coatham Marsh is a wonderful reserve and a great asset to Redcar and the wider Tees Valley area. I hope it draws more funding in the future, as we still have a lot of good ideas for improvements we can make here and there. Thanks to Northumbrian Water for making this latest phase possible."

See the attached document for additional customer feedback for the Wilder Coast project:

Wilder Coast Project Feedback 2021-2022

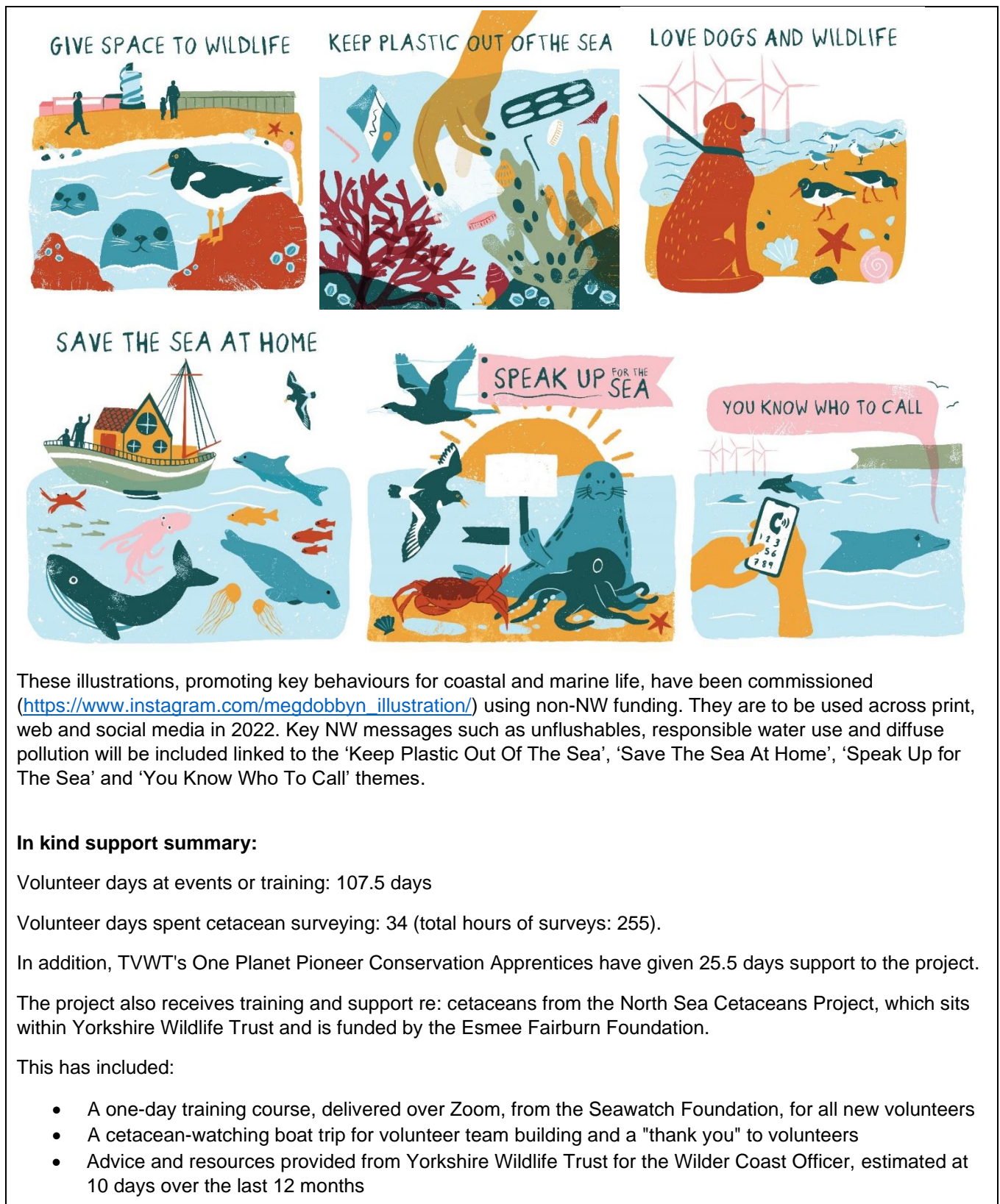
Lead Partner Quotes & Testimonials

Jeremy Garside (CEO)

"Support from the Northumbrian Water Group for Wilder Coast has been incredibly beneficial. This is not only because it has provided financial support to a project which has addressed threats and opportunities facing an incredibly important and beautiful wildlife asset, but also because NWG and its customers are such important stakeholders in the coastal and marine environment; there can be few situations where people's choices and actions can have such direct impact on so valuable a natural environment."

"Support from the Northumbrian Water Group has proved invaluable by enabling us to restore and enhance public access to Coatham Marsh, one of the last remaining areas of nature-rich habitat on the south side of the Tees Estuary. Not only is this reserve of international importance for its populations of water birds, but it also provides people from Redcar and the South Tees conurbation access to quality green and blue spaces. It is increasingly recognised and valued for its contribution to people's physical health, mental wellbeing and general quality of life."

Other Supporting Evidence



These illustrations, promoting key behaviours for coastal and marine life, have been commissioned (https://www.instagram.com/megdobbyn_illustration/) using non-NW funding. They are to be used across print, web and social media in 2022. Key NW messages such as unflushables, responsible water use and diffuse pollution will be included linked to the 'Keep Plastic Out Of The Sea', 'Save The Sea At Home', 'Speak Up for The Sea' and 'You Know Who To Call' themes.

In kind support summary:

Volunteer days at events or training: 107.5 days

Volunteer days spent cetacean surveying: 34 (total hours of surveys: 255).

In addition, TVWT's One Planet Pioneer Conservation Apprentices have given 25.5 days support to the project.

The project also receives training and support re: cetaceans from the North Sea Cetaceans Project, which sits within Yorkshire Wildlife Trust and is funded by the Esmee Fairburn Foundation.

This has included:

- A one-day training course, delivered over Zoom, from the Seawatch Foundation, for all new volunteers
- A cetacean-watching boat trip for volunteer team building and a "thank you" to volunteers
- Advice and resources provided from Yorkshire Wildlife Trust for the Wilder Coast Officer, estimated at 10 days over the last 12 months