

People and Red Kites, Red Kites and People

A Study into the Social Impacts of the Northern Kites Project 2004-2009

Northern Kites
In Gateshead's Derwent Valley



‘People and Red Kites: Red Kites and People’

A Study into the Social Impacts of the Northern Kites Project 2004-2009

Northern Kites

**With contributions from
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July 2009**



Northern Kites, a partnership project with the following organisations:



Northern Kites Social Impacts Study: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The *Northern Kites Social Impacts Study* evaluates how the red kites and the work of the Northern Kites Project has had an effect on the people and communities of the North East of England. The Northern Kites Project was the partnership Project that successfully returned red kites to North East England after an absence of 170 years. The success of this particular reintroduction Project was built upon raising people's awareness of the Project; red kites, and the wider natural environment.

For the purpose of this report, social impacts are defined as:

- Personal Growth
- Social Cohesion
- Environmental Renewal
- Health Promotion
- Social Change
- Community Development
- Strengthened Cultural Life

The Northern Kites Project was extremely successful at designing mechanisms and delivering a people engagement activities through which, people learned about red kites and wider biodiversity. Without awareness, there can be no social impact. Eight themed case studies document evidence of these social impacts; a summary of the outputs of these is offered below.

Case Study 1: 'Red Kites – An Evaluation of their Social Impacts'

Over the period June to December 2008, a study, which utilised a number of survey techniques to measure the social impact of the Project, was conducted.

- When asked 'Do you think that bringing red kites back to the North East, was a bad, poor, okay, good or great idea', 97.5% of respondents from the core Project area's answers fell into one of the two upper categories
- An analysis of respondents, resident in the lower Derwent valley, to a social impact survey revealed that 93.4% of these were aware of Northern Kites. The mean percentage awareness amongst a broader based sample in west Gateshead showed that 89.6% were aware of the Project
- When asked, 'How does seeing a red kite make you feel', 95% of survey respondents replied that the kites made them feel, 'good' or 'great'



- Over 81% of people questioned agreed, or strongly agreed, that the return of the kites to North East England had helped local people to become more interactive with one another
- When people in the lower Derwent valley were asked if they believed that red kites had 'added value' to their local area, 92.4% felt the kites had done so.

Case Study 2 - 'Learning to Fly... with Red Kites'

Northern Kites delivered an integrated Lifelong Learning Programme (2004-2009) for people of all ages and backgrounds giving people the opportunity to learn about, and experience, red kites and the environment. This included:

- The hugely successful and innovative Northern Kites 'Adopt-a-Kite' Scheme for schools. Through this, over 36,000 children in 107 schools in the North East were delivered positive red kite and environmental messages. All 107 Adopt-a-Kite schools across the region reported that their pupils' awareness of red kites had increased
- KIDS4KITES, an on-line resource
- The 'Reduce, Reuse and Recycle with Sprite the Kite' initiative, which used red kite ecology to educate over 60,000 children about sustainability issues
- Red kite themed adult education courses, which were delivered to over 180 professionals in organisations across the region
- Thousands of people, including over 150 landowners and managers, being provided with education materials through the distribution of bespoke Red Kite Information Packs
- The completion of ten red kite research projects by local university students, stimulated by the production of the Northern Kites Red Kite Research Menu.

Case Study 3: 'Northern Kites in the Spotlight'

To ensure that the 'people aspects' of Northern Kites' work were fully realised, it was key that the Project maintained a high visibility throughout its life.

- By April 2009, the Project and kites had featured in, 49 television transmissions and 36 radio broadcasts, both regional and national. These included, a national BBC Radio 4 documentary, and Northern Kites, a prime-time Tyne Tees documentary
- Printed media carried over 360 articles (an average of over 60 per annum or 1.29 per week) about Northern Kites. This included provincial and national publications, as well overseas press in Dubai, Pakistan, and South Africa
- In July 2004, the *Journal* newspaper's feature '100 Reasons why it's Great Up North', listed at No.40, 'Seeing red kites soar over suburban Gateshead'.



Case Study 4: 'Red Kites – by the People, for the People'

Volunteers have been involved in every aspect of the Northern Kites Project, and were the 'people engine' of the Project's work.

- Volunteers benefited from a personal perspective as they enjoyed improved social contacts, sharing experiences with like-minded people, and believed they had made a positive contribution to the Project's success, with consequent boosts to self-confidence and feelings of self-worth
- Over 140 people made voluntary contributions
- More than 100 individuals joined as Project volunteers, contributing 15,000 hours of work, estimated as being worth over £40,000 per annum
- The Northern Kites volunteers exceeded the Project's HLF-derived five-year target for voluntary contributions in less than three years
- In July 2008, Northern Kites volunteers won the regional Heritage Heroes Award in the Nationwide Building Society's Heritage and Community Awards
- Northern Kites Volunteers formed FORK (Friends of Red Kites in the North East), an organisation established to continue some aspects of the Northern Kites Project's work.

Case Study 5 – 'The Business of People'

The return of red kites to the North East of England provided commercial support to the local economy and offered the opportunity for the development of imaginative, collaborative business ventures.

- Over its lifetime, the Northern Kites Project helped support 12.5 Full Time Equivalent jobs in the local economy and generated at least £1.72 million economic activity
- One of the principal public transport providers in the North East region, Go North East, branded nine of its fleet as 'Red Kite' buses. The company has since seen a 10% rise in passenger numbers on this route, increasing annual turnover by £50,000 and received upwards of £90,000 additional net revenue. The buses deliver red kite messages to millions of people each year
- Red Kite Construction was so-named because of the return of the red kites. The company uses a red kite as its logo, and built the aptly named 'Red Kite House' in Dipton in 2008
- Wylam Brewery, in November 2007, launched the North East of England's first red kite beer, *Northern Kite*. With a Project message on every bottle sold, Northern Kite has become the brewery's second best selling product and generated over £43,000 in income, taking wildlife messages into places where these don't normally go



- 'Red Kites in the Red Mall', a 3m by 3m banner and red kite interpretation boards, was unveiled in June 2007 at MetroCentre, offering red kite messages to the centre's 25 million visitors each year
- Property companies and estate agents have used the kites to promote housing developments and sales in the area of the lower Derwent valley

Case Study 6: 'Red Kites are Good for You!'

The presence of the red kites has created positive health benefits.

- Thirty-three Health Walks were organised between September and April 2009. Sixty-three people registered for these walks, with an average attendance of six on each walk. Walk participants have since reported better health
- Two regular walkers were so inspired by the red kites, and their fitness so much improved, that they chose to become Health Walk Leaders
- A survey of local residents found that 22% of respondents attributed an improvement in their physical state to the presence of the kites
- The volunteer health survey indicated that 20% of respondents volunteered to improve their health and wellbeing and that many experienced improvements in such as a result of volunteering

Case Study 7: 'Kites in the Community'

Northern Kites as part of its community outreach set up a number of red kite information networks, termed 'Community Kite Clusters' (CKCs), to deliver aspects of its community outreach work:

- In these CKCs, between 2007-2008, Northern Kites delivered 141 events, engaging with over 26,000 people
- The east Gateshead Cluster, centred on Leam Lane, an area of high social deprivation, was the Project's priority area. Here, red kite activities attracted 1,200 people and 166 people attended 'Red Kite Safaris'. Over 560 pupils from Adopt-a-Kite schools in this Cluster visited Gateshead Council's 'Kitewatch' events during 2007 and 2008 to see red kites.
- Such events encouraged social interaction, reduced isolation, helped people make friends, linked existing community networks and increased sociability

Case Study 8: People and Events Monitoring Case Study

The high level of public awareness of Northern Kites resulted, in part, from the Project's programme of people engagement activities.



- Between 2004 and 2008, 260 Northern Kites events were organised, at these over 58,000 people, including 6,500 families, were engaged in face-to-face contacts
- Between 2004 and 2008, 26,564 people attended red kite viewing events.
- The Project generated an absolute minimum of 80 memberships for the RSPB and the National Trust

Northern Kites was the North East region's highest profile wildlife project and connected more people to the environment than probably any previous similar work in the region. From a social perspective the Project and the red kites:

- Inspired local people, not only to become more aware of wildlife and the environment, but to take part in physical activity and become more involved in their own community helping forge the local identity
- Provided access to the kites and Gateshead's green environment for people of all abilities and backgrounds, using 'avenues' not previously available. Media coverage and local amenities have assisted this spread of information
- Helped enrich people's quality of life experience, by stimulating community cohesion and increasing cultural participation through the kites. Local people have gone out of their way to interact with other people in their community, because of the red kites. A powerful example of how wildlife can act as 'social glue'
- Empowered communities to take action and become involved in local projects, whilst allowing personal growth for peoples of all ages by changing and challenging attitudes
- Inspired the creation of local business opportunities, where the red kite has been used as a product to stimulate economic activity
- Contributed to improving local health outcomes via regular red kites health walks and through more people using the countryside to see kites, with all of the consequent health and wellbeing benefits.

The Northern Kites Project delivered abundant social impact. It provided engagement and learning opportunities for volunteers and local people. It inspired local people with the quality of their own green environment and inspired artists to create red kite themed art. As red kites were increasingly viewed as wildlife icons, local people felt empowered by them to such a degree that they formed a new community organisation, Friends of Red Kites (FoRK), which will deliver future red kite work 'for the people, by the people'. Furthermore, the Project benefited a wide array of social groupings, from local people through to regional agencies; local residents; schools and colleges; businesses; local heritage, wildlife and environmental groups. At a strategic level, the Project's high media profile contributed to the positive image of the North East. Nature-based tourism work, around the development of the Red Kite Trail, showed how the Project, which ostensibly commenced in order to bring red kites back to the



region, had not only supported the local community but also catalysed significant economic benefits.

In conclusion, Northern Kites, which began work in 2004 to establish a population of red kites in northern England, became not only one of Britain's most successful reintroduction projects of its kind in purely wildlife terms, but also, arguably, the highest profile and socio-economically speaking, most successful wildlife project in the North East, ever.



Contents

Executive Summary	1
Section 1: Introduction and Background to the Northern Kites Social Impacts Study	11
Section 2: Social Impacts Study Methodology: Evidence Gathering, Data Collation and Analysis	18
Section 3: Results: Social Impacts, Social Benefits	21
Section 4: Who Has Benefited?	35
Section 5: Case Studies:	36
Case Study 1: 'Red Kites – An Evaluation of their Social Impacts': Social Impacts	37
Case Study 2: 'Learning to Fly... with Red Kites': Lifelong Learning and Education	47
Case Study 3: 'Northern Kites in the Spotlight': Red Kites in the Media	55
Case Study 4: 'Red Kites – by the People, for the People': People and Community Engagement	60
Case Study 5: 'The Business of People': Engaging People through Red Kites and Business	68
Case Study 6: 'Red Kites are Good for You!': Red Kites and Health Benefits	75
Case Study 7: 'Kites in the Community': Community Kite Cluster	80
Case Study 8: 'Flying by Numbers': People and Events Monitoring	88
Section 6: Analysis and Discussion	95
Section 7: Concluding Remarks	99
References & Bibliography	102
Appendices	107
Appendix 1: The Lower Derwent Valley: Gateshead's Derwent Valley	107
Appendix 2: Red Kites: Background, Status and the Reintroduction Programme	109
Appendix 3a Northern Kites Social Impacts Survey: Short Questionnaire	110
Appendix 3b Northern Kites Social Impacts Survey: Long Questionnaire	111



Appendix 4: Northern Kites: Project Objectives	117
Appendix 5: Gibside Estate Visitor Survey Form	119

List of Tables

Table 1: Awareness of various 'products' associated with the red kites	41
Table 2: Diversity of press coverage of Northern Kites	56
Table 3: Northern Kites Community Kite Clusters summary information	82
Table 4: Community Kite Cluster - event delivery	83
Table 5: Events delivered in east Gateshead 2007 – 2008	83
Table 6: Staff inputs compared to people participation outputs in CKCs, 2007–2008	84
Table 7: People engagement figures at events (March 2004 up until end 2008)	90
Table 8: Estimated level of red kite awareness at events (2006-2008)	90
Table 9: Summary of results from exit and visitor surveys undertaken by Project and partners	91
Table 10: Gibside visitor survey postcode analysis.	91



Acknowledgements

The Northern Kites' Social Impact Study was made possible by the enthusiasm and support of all participating Northern Kites volunteers and staff, and the willingness of all respondents to give of their time in answering various surveys, questionnaires and feeding into a myriad of evaluation processes. Thank you to all of them. Particular thanks go to all of the wonderful Northern Kites volunteers who, over the years, counted numbers at events, talked to scores of thousands of people about red kites and assessed public awareness levels and various other aspects of our work. The authors are especially grateful to all those members of the public who took the time to carefully complete the relevant survey forms or who responded to requests for further information as and wherever necessary.

A large debt of gratitude is owed to the staff of the Psychology Department of Newcastle University, in particular Dr Jenny Read, who organised, and Albert Lim, who undertook the statistical analysis of the results of the volunteers' health survey in early 2007. Likewise, Ashley Patchet at the *Rowlands Gill Directory*, who was ever helpful and supportive and Amy Hunt of the *Evening Chronicle* who posted survey results from an on-line survey form. The authors acknowledge the assistance and input of Julie Simpson (Durham County Council) who provided input to some of the Project's community outreach work and read drafts of this report, provided constructive comment, and indicated where improvements might be made.

Various aspects of the study and surveys were made possible by the co-operation and enthusiasm of a number of the Northern Kites Project partners, who assisted with, or facilitated, various surveys upon their land and estates. In particular, thanks go to: the National Trust's staff at the Gibside Estate (for the Gibside Survey), with special mention to Catherine Martin, Richard Bradley and Ann-Marie Ashman; the Countryside Management Team of Gateshead Council (for the Visitor Survey); the Forestry Commission at Chopwell Forest Festival (Exit Survey); and, the Events Team of Gateshead Council, in particular Debbie Ross and Pamela Beadling for all of their help at the Gateshead Flower Shows. Likewise, everybody at: St. Barnabas Church, Rowlands Gill; Winlaton Mill Village Hall; Winlaton Community Centre; Lintzford Garden Centre, and Flower Design in Rowlands Gill, for allowing surveys to be conducted on or near to their premises.

For specialist advice and support in developing the style and content of the questionnaires for the Social Impact study, the authors gratefully acknowledge the support of Stephen Crossley and his colleagues in the Social Cohesion Team of Gateshead Council. Northern Kites owes a huge debt of gratitude to Ashton Lamb (BA Hons.), of the Geography Department of Newcastle University, who undertook the principle public survey that forms the 'meat' of much



of this report and who, whilst busy on other projects, always found time to feed into the development of the totality of the work captured herein.

Finally, the Northern Kites Team would like to record its gratitude to and respect for the people of the North East. They have made the Team's work such a pleasure and, not infrequently, made its members feel humbled by their expressions of unbridled support and goodwill for its work. The delight and sheer, unalloyed joy that so many have demonstrated for the red kites, which they have made their own, has been a source of pride and validation to all.

Photographic Acknowledgements

We owe all of the many photographers that have supported the work of the Project over the years a huge debt of gratitude. We would like to acknowledge the ones featured here, for the use of their images in this document, with apologies for any accidental omissions or oversights. This report features images captured by: Northern Kites, June Atkinson, Ian Forrest, Stephen Fryer, Rena Halford, Ashton Lamb, Doug McCutcheon, One NorthEast, Scotswood Community Garden, Giedre Tomkeviciute, Ray Wilby, Neil Wasp and Kaleel Zibe.



Section 1: Introduction & Background to the Northern Kites Social Impacts Study

1.1 Background to the Social Impacts Study

The economic evaluation of environmental programmes of work has become, in recent years, if not commonplace certainly a very much more widely practised research process (Environmental Resources Management, 2001; Shiel *et al.*, 2002). The worth of biodiversity both in terms of its value *per se* and in terms of issues such as eco-system servicing, is something that has been increasingly highlighted as the drive towards sustainable



Figure 1. Local people 'see the way ahead' with red kites

development has risen up the political and social agendas. A similar programme of evaluating the social benefits from such work is less in evidence, but equally important at a societal level and for the benefits that might be derived from such work, by people. The reasons behind this are in part, the very great difficulty in clearly defining the

exact nature of social impacts, their relative values and worth, and, perhaps more taxingly, in quantifying the exact amount and nature of their effects. Away from the specific field of environmental work, the concept of evaluating the social impact of more diverse community projects has not been ignored. Indeed, where such schemes receive public monies, and in particular in the case of works funded through agencies, such as the Heritage Lottery Fund [HLF], great importance has been attached to assessing the worth of such projects, particularly where schemes are intended to engage with the public and to deliver social impacts (Applejuice, 2006). Here, the conclusions of one particular assessment highlight the importance of 'varied opportunities for participation', to 'target diverse audiences' and to 'create opportunities for the achievement of various positive outcome', all of which Northern Kites was keen to factor into its community work (Applejuice, 2006).

It is clear that wildlife and landscape related activities have the potential to deliver significant social benefits and goods (Dickie *et al.*, 2006). This is especially so when they are associated



with a delivery mechanism that places people at the heart of the process. Northern Kites was formulated as just such a project.

From its conception, the Northern Kites Project set out to deliver social benefits and create a level of social impact not normally associated with a wildlife project. The Project aimed to develop three levels of social connectivity. Primarily this was to:

- Raise people's awareness of the Project, red kites and, more generally, the environment
- Engage people more directly with the Project, in a one-to-one relationship and through face-to-face contacts, with Project representatives and processes
- Motivate people to 'do something' as result of their interaction with Northern Kites, ideally to participate in the Project and its rolled out programme of activities or to, at a personnel level, begin to contemplate society's wider environmental challenges.

Ultimately, this pyramid of engagement was intended to lead to enhanced delivery of the Project's core objectives, by the people, for the people (and red kites) and, going forward, to be sustained by the people. It is by reporting 'how much' of each of these elements that Northern Kites has delivered, that some 'independent' measurement of the Project's social impact might be determined (see Case Studies 1-8).

1.2 Aim of the Social Impacts Study

The social impacts study set out to find out more about how, and how much, the red kites and the work of the Northern Kites Project has affected the people and communities of the North East of England region. With a particular emphasis upon the immediate area of the reintroduction (see Appendix 1) and to determine how the Project's work has fitted into the overall picture of the changing social fabric of the region.

This study report attempts to identify, document and contextualise the type of social impacts stimulated and derived by the Project, and to quantify the amount and worth of these to local

people. The study was in part commissioned, and in part undertaken, by the Northern Kites Project.



Figure 2. Jesmond Dene Kite day



In the broadest sense, this research was undertaken in order to add a new dimension to existing socio-economic and environmental rationales for the development of projects, such as Northern Kites, by highlighting their role in social development and cohesion.

The study aimed, through its analysis and conclusions:

- To formulate evidence of the social impact that can be delivered through environmental projects, which place people and the community at the heart of their processes
- To identify ways of documenting and assessing social impacts that are useful for policy-makers and for those working in the environmental sectors.



Figure 3. Red Kite flying in the local landscape

Evidence gathering, collation of information and survey work for this study report was undertaken during the period March 2004 – April 2009.

1.3 The Social Impacts Study – Objectives

This study set out to identify and document evidence of the social impacts delivered by the Northern Kites Project.

In summary, the study's objectives were to:

- Identify the Project's social impacts
- Assess, where possible, the value of the above
- If possible, measure and quantify these impacts and the importance of them to the sectors in which they had been delivered
- Assess the levels of public awareness of the kites and of various aspects of the Project's work, and relate this to its degree of social impact
- Identify in which sectors of society the impacts have taken effect
- Determine how far from the Project's core area some of these impacts had taken effect



1.4 What Are Social Impacts?

Work undertaken by Matarasso (1997), as part of a multi-discipline review of such work in art projects, highlighted a number of areas that he felt could be considered as constituting, social impacts. These included:

- Activities that contributed to creating personal growth. The products of such, might lead to enhanced self-confidence in the individual, and contribute to skill-building and support or provide educational developments, which might improve people's social contacts and, ultimately, their employability
- Outputs that make a positive contribution to social cohesion by developing or supporting the creation of new networks and that foster understanding, thereby building local capacity for organisations and self-determination within communities
- Bringing about environmental renewal and health promotion, and which inject an element of creativity into the planning processes of organisations
- Something which produces manifest social change
- Works that provide flexible, responsive and cost-effective complements to a community's development
- A process which strengthens cultural life, and contributes vibrancy and vitality to a 'culture of success'



Figure 4. Scotswood Natural Community Garden 'leaf red kite'

It was against these aspects of social impact that Northern Kites attempted to measure its delivery. Manifestations of social impact can be evidenced in many ways, but at the most basic level, social impact has been achieved by something when people attest to feeling differently because of its existence. Greater levels of impact are demonstrated when people go on to alter their views because of this change of feeling, and finally, and most importantly, when they act differently because of their experiences.

1.5 What are Red Kites, Why Reintroduce Them to the North East?

Red kites are large, beautiful birds of prey with a distinctively forked tail, russet plumage and a wingspan of more than five and a half feet. Kites are principally scavenging feeders, their



main food being carrion and invertebrates, and were once common across Great Britain. However, they were driven to the point of extinction by human persecution and for most of the 20th century, there were fewer than 20 pairs in the UK. Since 1989, steered by the Joint Nature Conservation Committee, a variety of organisations have been working on a programme to return the red kite to its original range in both Britain and Ireland. Up to 2000, there had been six re-introduction schemes, three each in England and Scotland (Carter, 2001). By 2003, North East England had been identified as prime location for the next reintroduction scheme, connecting the projects to the south and north (for more details see Appendix 2). Because of its aesthetic appeal, rarity and attractive behaviour, the red kite has a strong cultural resonance with people.

1.6 The Northern Kites Project ~ Background & Introduction

Northern Kites was the groundbreaking environmental project that, over the Project period, 2004-2009, brought the red kite back as a breeding species to Gateshead, and the North East of England, after it had been absent for close to 200 years. The release sites for the kites were close to the heart of urban Tyneside – within three and a half kilometres of the Gateshead MetroCentre, based in Gateshead's Derwent valley (for more details about the Derwent valley, see Appendix 1). In this respect, Northern Kites was a world-first in reintroducing these spectacular birds of prey into an urban-fringe setting.



Figure 5. Red Kite flying close to houses Barlow Burn

Gateshead might seem a slightly unusual location to choose for a wildlife re-introduction of this nature, but the lower Derwent valley (in the west half of Gateshead Borough), so close to a major urban area was ideal, for a variety of reasons. Firstly, the habitat mosaic and its extent, was very good for kites. Secondly, much of the land, which the kites might use after

release, was already in the ownership or management of organisations that directly managed their land holdings for nature conservation or heritage interest, e.g. Gateshead Council, the National Trust, and the Forestry Commission. Thirdly, and most importantly in the sense of social impact, the area, and therefore the kites, is easily accessible to hundreds of thousands of people within the Tyneside conurbation.



Northern Kites was a partnership project between the lead partners Natural England and the RSPB, Gateshead Council, Northumbrian Water, the National Trust and the Forestry Commission, with additional funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund and SITA Trust. The Partnership is a mix of public, private and third party sectors and as such, is uniquely able to meet the delivery challenges of such a demanding project.

In essence, the Northern Kites Project comprises four strands of work:

- Wildlife - the return of the red kite to its former range in North East England
- People - the opportunity to give people and communities access to the kite, so that they can enjoy and learn about wildlife and the wider environment through the Project
- Economics - the chance to show how such a project can be good not just for wildlife and people, but also for the local economy and communities
- Partnership - the illustration of how partners from the charitable, private and public sectors, working in an imaginative way together can better deliver rewards and social benefits, not just for wildlife but also to improve local people's quality of life

Between 2004 and 2006, 94 red kites were released in Gateshead, less than six miles from Newcastle City Centre. Birds began to breed in 2006, and by 2008, a self-sustaining population had been established in the region for the first time in over two centuries.

The potential proximity of people and red kites offered up the opportunity to set up a scheme that did not just focus on the usual conservation priorities of such a project but set out to



Figure 6. Nick Baker and pupils of Rowlands Gill Infant School at the launch of the Adopt-a-Kite Scheme, October 2004



address a wide range of environmental and social challenges, using the red kites. Northern Kites was as much about people as it was the birds themselves. The North East is well known for its rich natural heritage and exciting wildlife spectacles, but many of these are relatively remote from the region's main population centres. Northern Kites brought stunning birds of prey right into the vibrant heart of the region and to its people, and has made them available to people on a daily basis.



Section 2: Social Impacts Study Methodology - Evidence Gathering, Data Collation and Analysis

2.1 Study Methods

The study employed a mix of reviews of existing evidence, desktop studies, an examination of public survey data and a survey of existing studies and reports. It also collated examples of physical evidence, such as images and quotes from people, to demonstrate the degree to which kites have become ingrained in the local community.

The study drew evidence from a number of strands of work. These included:

- Existing data sets that quantified different aspects of the social benefits created/influenced by the presence of the kites and/or the Project
- A detailed analysis of the outputs of the academic study into Northern Kites' social impacts in Gateshead's Derwent valley undertaken by Ashton Lamb of Newcastle University. This work included extensive canvassing of local people's attitudes and sampling their opinions about the kites
- An analysis of the data from Northern Kites' surveys of visitor numbers and attitudes,
- An analysis of the results of exit surveys at a range of major events to assess levels of understanding and awareness about kites and the work of the Project
- Information from the Project's ongoing community outreach activities
- Dr. Frederick Milton's review of Derwent valley-based businesses' attitudes to the return of the red kites (in particular, the value, from a social perspective of the numbers of jobs supported by the work of the Project)
- A review of the press and media coverage of the Project, 2004-2009
- A review of the Project's educational impacts and lifelong learning activity.



Figure 7. Collecting social impact data at Gateshead Flower Show, July 2008



All of this was cross-referred to the Government's headline Quality of Life Indicators (Audit Commission, 2002) to set the social impact delivery of the Northern Kites Project in the context of this suite of key social drivers.

2.2 Study Period



Figure 8. Showing people red kites

The desktop reviews and collation of evidence for this study was conducted largely between July 2008 and April 2009. Some of this was done in tandem with the survey work undertaken for the Northern Kites Social Impacts Study (unpub. Lamb, 2009) and the economic evaluation of the Project's outputs (Milton, 2009), some results of which are incorporated into this document.

2.3 Study Report

This report documents its findings in three main ways:

1) Broad Social Impacts

In the main body of the report a set of social impacts, grouped into themed sections are identified. For each of these, some examples, in bullet point format, illustrate how the red kites and the Project delivered in that area. These bullet points highlight mechanisms or approaches and they bring into focus what these mechanisms have delivered for people. The



body of the report is essentially collative and qualitative, it is deliberately 'data-light', but it has some quantitative documentation, where relevant.

2) Case Studies

In eight themed case studies, the evidence of the social relevance of the red kites to people is documented and quantified in a more detailed fashion.

- Case Study 1: 'Red Kites – An Evaluation of their Social Impacts'
- Case Study 2: 'Learning to Fly... with Red Kites'
- Case Study 3: 'Northern Kites in the Spotlight'
- Case Study 4: 'Red Kites – by the People, for the People'
- Case Study 5: 'The Business of People'
- Case Study 6: 'Red Kites are Good for You!'
- Case Study 7: 'Kites in the Community'
- Case Study 8: 'Flying by Numbers'.

These case studies should be viewed as the quantitative 'engine' of the report. All of the research work for these case studies was undertaken in the North East of England, much of it in the core Project area of Gateshead's Derwent valley.

3) Documentary Evidence

Finally, the report is 'populated' by two sets of documentary evidence. Firstly, images which illustrate the impact of the red kites on people and the social fabric of the area. Secondly, real words from real people. This is, in effect, a personal testimony that goes beyond 'evidence'; demonstrating that the oft-repeated cliché, 'hearts and minds', sometimes means exactly that. With regard to this use of statements and quotations, in most instances, names have been reduced to initials in order to protect the privacy of originators. A database of fully referenced personal testimonies is held by Northern Kites.

"...the place where red kites have been reintroduced into the wild, right next to the biggest shopping centre in Europe, while at the entrance to the constituency is the symbol of the renaissance of the north-east, the Angel of the North."

**Statement in the Parliamentary maiden speech of David Anderson MP, Blaydon
Constituency, May 2005**



Section 3: Results: Social Impacts, Social Benefits

“Very worthwhile project, lovely to see them being reintroduced. Great for kids and adults alike.”

D. & K. B., Forest Hall, Tyne & Wear

3.1 What Have Been the Broad Social Impacts of the Northern Kites Project?

Northern Kites, and the red kites that are at the heart of the Project, have delivered a wide range, of social benefits in considerable amounts. This level of delivery amounts to a great deal more than might have been anticipated at the outset of the Project, based upon work delivered by similar, previous work around the British Isles (Dickie *et al.*, 2006).



Figure 9. Minister for Biodiversity, Jim Knight MP, meeting a red kite, July 2005

Public awareness ~ At the beginning of the Project’s work, it was hoped that the kites would become widely recognised by the local community and, in the wider context, have registered in the consciousness of the people of the North East. In respect of this, the number of people that have a ‘sense’ of the kites and have enjoyed them in some way would be a measure of social impact (see Case Studies 1 and 8). Furthermore, it was hoped that some measure of economic and demonstrable quality of life benefits would, through time, be attributable to the kites. This would show that kites were more than just symbolic, but had actually helped to deliver tangible or perceived benefits to people (see Case Studies 1 to 8).

The registration of the kites and the work of the Project as ‘newsworthy’ by the press and broadcast media is, in itself, a measure of social impact. It is also a means of supporting the delivery of a broad social message. So, the high level of coverage of the kites and the Project in the media, and how this has been sustained over time, can be used to indicate the degree to which the kites have made an impact within, and beyond the region (see Case Study 3).



3.2 Specific Social Impacts of the Northern Kites Project

In particular, the Project has delivered social benefits in six key ways to people and local communities, and through these, achieved many aspects of Matarasso's (1997) suite of social impacts.

- i) Quality of Life and Place – The Project has contributed to the improvement of local people's quality of life and helped enhance their perception of place, delivering elements of social cohesion, community empowerment and self-determination through this
- ii) Increased People's Aspirations – The presence of the kites has helped increase the aspirations of local people, thereby supporting the growth of some aspects of social cohesion
- iii) Helped Promote Cultural Aspects of the Area – The kites have helped maximise, and re-focus people's attention on, some of the cultural aspects of the area's local image and identity
- iv) Promoted Positive Perceptions of the lower Derwent valley and Gateshead – The Project and the kites have raised the profile and enhanced perceptions of the North East both within and beyond the region, delivering elements of community empowerment and self-determination, by promoting a positive local image and identity, in an imaginative and visionary way
- v) Stimulated the Local Economy – Red kites have taken care of business by supporting local business endeavours and delivering money into people's pockets through this
- vi) Provided Engagement and Learning Opportunities - For volunteers and local people, the kites have become a stimulus to gain knowledge, which has turned into a crucial element of delivering sustainable outcomes, and delivering elements of health and wellbeing.

“Wow!” this is just so exciting seeing kites above our home in Rowlands Gill. I've waited a lifetime to see them, so, ‘Thanks!’ I used to look in a bird book at age ten and be so upset that there were so few in the country and that they were nearly extinct. The really great news is how this project has captured the imaginations of the local kids, the older teenagers are so interested, while the younger ones are thrilled. These are the same kids that are blamed for being a nuisance, yet all of them are interested and protective of the kites. This project is a real cross-generational thing and just shows that teenagers really do care!”

Email Received from P. H., 01/08/06



3.3 What Has Northern Kites Delivered In these Six Key Areas?

The Project has created benefits for many people and communities across the region, over a spectrum of social sectors and in a wide variety of ways. Northern Kites has, in effect, created a social realm in which people of all ages and backgrounds have been included and have had the opportunity to participate.

i) Quality of Life and Place

Northern Kites has contributed to the improvement of local people's quality of life by encouraging them to better appreciate and use the green infrastructure at their disposal, thereby securing better health outcomes, through increased activity levels. Furthermore, it has enhanced their perception of quality of place, leading to them placing a higher value on where they live, compared to their view prior to the return of the red kites. Some of the Project's activities helped deliver against local authority's targets under the 2007 Sustainable Communities Act (Gateshead, no date), which seeks to develop increased social cohesion and, from the point of view of the individual, enhanced citizenship.

Helping people to review their attitudes about where they live and its value as a 'visit destination' can have material benefits. For a start, people may now choose to visit their local green space, the kite-inhabited Derwent valley, rather than going further a field, which contributes to reductions in pollution and personal carbon footprints. This helps Gateshead Council, to move towards meeting its obligations under the Climate Change Act, November 2008. Specific examples, to which Northern Kites has contributed in this area of social impact, include:

- Inspiring people with the quality of their own green environment. The kites being viewed as an iconic indicator of this has helped the kites and the Project secure support from local people. It has also helped promote a positive image of Gateshead and the North East, by making red kites a symbol of social and cultural pride for Gateshead and the region (see Case Study 3)
- Creating a high public awareness of red kites across the North East region, which has led to the *de facto* definition of the core Project area as 'red kite country' (see Case Studies 1 and 8)
- Helping people place a higher value on wildlife generally and highlighting how special the wildlife-rich, green infrastructure of the lower Derwent valley is to the whole of the North East of England, and to them individually
- Marketing and building a profile for the area, and making people want more for the area that they now perceive as even more special, because of the red kites



- Getting the kites to work as ‘social glue’ within local communities. People have bonded over the kites, talked with each other about the kites and consequently, connected in many small ways, as people with something special ‘in common’ (see Case Study 1). An example is through the Project’s Community Presentations programme, some of which was delivered to social care groups, such as the Rowlands Gill ‘Live at Home’ scheme. This delivered information to elderly people who may be housebound or have limited horizons, and would otherwise, not be able to access wildlife experiences

“I have just seen for the first time the magnificent Red Kites while playing golf at Whickham golf course. They are absolutely fantastic, thanks for all the hard work that has been done on the project, I for one will be keeping a keen eye on the skies from now on and hope they bring me as much luck in the future as on this day I also hit my first ever hole in one. Good luck to all your team and best wishes for the future.”

Email received from J.D., 11/10/07
- Enhancing the already high quality of the Derwent valley and Gateshead, making it an even more attractive place to live and work by ‘creating’ a major new ‘cultural destination’
- Using the kites to highlight the various benefits that the countryside, the kites and other wildlife located in it, bring to local people. In this sense, the kites have been utilised to enrich people’s quality of life experience and their sense of place
- Making people feel proud enough of where they live to ‘fly’ a red kite on their lapel. Over 6,000 red kite pin badges have been distributed across the North East region, via Northern Kites, helping to fly the kite for people and wildlife
- Demonstrating that ‘the kites can do anything’ - even improve one’s golf swing! The power of red kites to improve everybody’s perceived quality of life was well demonstrated during the early autumn of 2007, when John Dixon, playing a round of golf at Whickham Golf Course saw his first ever red kites (five of them together over the fifth and sixth fairways). A little later, and clearly inspired, John hit his first ever hole in one!
- The return of the kites, and the local community’s reaction to this, stimulated Gateshead Council’s Local Environment Services to create a permanent public red kite viewing point at Sherburn Towers, Rowlands Gill, close to one of the birds’ large winter roost sites. The viewpoint features a seat, and a red kite-shaped viewing platform with a five-metre



Figure 10. Red Kite Viewing Point



wingspan. A local artist, Alan Mould, was commissioned to create an interpretation panel, 'Red Kites on your Doorstep'. This work was funded through the Council's Neighbourhood Pride programme which is designed to support projects that demonstrate that very phenomenon. The viewpoint enables everybody, locals and visitors alike, to better enjoy the red kites and understand the natural environment.

"Have just spent an amazing 15-20 minutes watching three kites soaring and swooping around and over our rooftops - also experienced what felt like 'the watcher being watched' when one of them seemed to drop down to hover over us for a better look! I am now sitting at the bedroom window watching them flying around over the edge of Hanover towards Blaydon Burn. I am just beginning to realize how privileged we are to have them in this area."

Email received from J. H., Winlaton on 01/05/07



Figure 11. Red kites being used to market barn re-developments

ii) Increased People's Aspirations

Although the Northern Kites Project has an iconic wildlife species at its heart, part of its goal was to encourage people to undertake a 'dialogue' with the wider countryside (and the mix of natural and cultural heritage located within it) and the green infrastructure, which can bring them so many personal benefits.

The Project has helped to increase the aspirations and expectations of local people, and the kites themselves have affected many people at an intensely personal level. Some of the practical out workings of this process is that the Derwent valley is now perceived as a more desirable place to live, with local estate agents using the kites to support house sales, and people wishing to associate with the kites. Examples include:

- The fact that the Blaydon Rugby Club under-8's team chose to call themselves the 'Red Kites'
- Engaging people at a personal and emotional level with red kites can be of profound importance for people. Examples of such 'relationships' are many. Eric Nicholson, a Northern Kites volunteer, has produced both paintings and prose about the kites, and how they have

"After joining Northern Kites as a volunteer in 2005 I was inspired to pick up my paint brushes once again. I would like to thank Northern Kites for getting me back on track!"

Karen Malone, Northern Kites Volunteer



affected him. Karen Malone, who studied art and graphic design in the 1980s but had not produced artwork for several years, has found that working with Northern Kites has re-kindled her passion for art. Since, she has produced and sold, red kite needlework, paintings and photographs

- Inspiring people to document their feelings for red kites in artwork is clearly a manifestation of social impact through cultural activity. Community art groups in Gateshead, and individuals in Teesdale, were so inspired by the kites they saw they felt moved to create artwork. This process was not to generate income but to celebrate the return of the kites and the pride the artists felt that *their* community now had red kites again
- Inspiring other organisations and projects to use the kites in order to promote what they do and have set out to achieve e.g. the Explore Your Environment (EYE) project and the *Culture Shock* work with the Tyne & Wear Museum Service
- The opportunity for people who would usually be precluded from easily accessing iconic wildlife species, to see kites because of the bird's nearness to so many people. Such lack of access might be because of geographical distance, or in some instances, personal challenges, whether these are disabilities, learning difficulties or young people in foster care. People, in all of these 'categories' have been able to access the kites. Some may not otherwise have had a chance for such a positive experience of wildlife, without the work of the Project.

"An excellent project, accessible to all".

B.A. & R.J. B., Newcastle,

"I saw two red kites above my house near a large grassed area where some boys were playing football. They circled very low and appeared to be looking for food. Neighbours and children all came out into the street to see kites, everyone was very excited and delighted to see the kites so low. I was amazed and had THE best view ever of a red kite, it came so low and close, the image will stay with me forever, it was absolutely amazing! I got some bacon from the fridge and threw it down close to the kite which then swooped down and picked it up...just feet from where they were all standing....then did it again a second time! Everyone was amazed...best experience ever!"

Phonecall received from M. H., Hanover Estate, Winlaton on 03/04/08

iii) Helped Promote Cultural Aspects of the Area

Northern Kites has highlighted some of the cultural aspects of the area, re-calibrating people's expectations of what culture and heritage mean in relation to each other. It has demonstrated how red kites and other aspects of heritage can contribute to the 'cultural offer' of the region.

For example:



- By their use on the front cover of *Spreading our Wings*, Gateshead's Cultural Strategy 2005-2010 (Gateshead, 2005) and inside, as a case study, the red kites have shown how natural heritage fits into the cultural sphere, and demonstrated the species' powerful ability to register as an iconic, cultural image
- "I was in Gibside estate working this week between the chapel and the monument. The staff told me to watch out for red kites. It took my breath away when it was above my head, this was most magnificent bird I have ever seen and I am 57 years old. This project is a credit to you all."*

Received by Email from M. H. 17/10/08

- By focusing attention on the potential of Gateshead's Derwent valley as a local and regional cultural, environmental and heritage resource, the kites have 'reminded' people of the other cultural and heritage resources in the Derwent valley
- Through the work of the Tyne & Wear Joint Local Access Forum, in autumn 2007, the red kites were incorporated into the strategic 'Tyne and Wear Access' map. This is the key public rights of way access map for the area, and is available at all libraries and Tourist Information Centres across the region. As well as featuring an information panel about red kites and the Project, the map indicates the best places to see kites with the presence of kite symbols. It is the only element of wildlife that is so featured on these maps
- The number of images of red kites taken by photographers and created by artists now numbers thousands and hundreds respectively, and various artists have created red kite work in paint, ceramics and glass. This in itself is a measure of the impact made by the kites upon people. Such red kite inspired artwork and photography has small-scale economic benefits for the artists and photographers selling their work, but more importantly it illustrates to those seeing the work the degree of cultural resonance that the kites have delivered



Figure 12. Glass red kite artwork

iv) Promoted Positive Perceptions of the Lower Derwent Valley and Gateshead.

The Project and the red kites have contributed hugely to promoting positive perceptions of the lower Derwent valley, Gateshead, Tyneside and the region as a whole, well beyond the boundaries of the North East. This outcome has been achieved, in part, through the Project's enviably high community and media profile throughout the lifetime of the Project (for more details see Case Study 3). This high profile was established in the very early days of the



Project when it received a message of support from the Prime Minister, the Right Honourable Tony Blair MP, in July 2004:

"I am delighted to support the Northern kites Project to reintroduce this beautiful bird of prey into the North East. The Project embraces imaginative and visionary approach to bringing wildlife to the people of the North East, and links the cultural heritage of Gateshead and Newcastle to adjacent high quality countryside. The Project is a real exemplar of sustainable development bringing environmental, economic, and social benefits. It is good to see a wide range of organisations involved in this innovative project including English Nature (now Natural England) and the RSPB taking the lead, supported by Gateshead Council and Northumbrian Water."

Tony Blair, 10 Downing Street, London SW1A 2AA, July 2004

Other examples include:

- Highlighting, at the very highest level, the importance of the lower Derwent valley for its environmental riches. The Project attracted three Ministerial visits over a four year period, in June 2005, August 2007 and October 2008. On Monday 20th August 2007, the Project provided a red kite safari for the Right Honourable Nick Brown MP, Minister for the North East. He spent three hours in the Project area, watching kites with Northern Kites volunteers and discussing the role of kites in environment-led regeneration. In addition, the Project has secured a huge amount of support from local politicians and representatives from key organisations in the region, amongst them the Chair of One North East and the Director of Government Office for the North East. The Project has attracted influential visitors from a wide array of countries including: Hein Grossler, an advisor on eco-tourism to the South African National Parks service (autumn 2008); Utaka Godo, editor of one of Japan's most influential bird watching magazines (winter 2006); and representatives from Iraq



Figure 13. Hein Grossler from South Africa takes in the Red Kite Trail

"We are a couple from Gateshead and have recently been on holiday to the Isle of Man where we attended a falconry display, the man in charge knew all about Northern Kites and mentioned the project when flying his red kite! Fame spreads...!"

Feedback at event at MetroCentre, 29/08/07



(summer 2006 and summer 2008) and the Kurdistan Regional Government (summer 2008)

- By the end of 2008, the work of the Project had been referred to in two separate Parliamentary Early Day Motions, in March and November 2008, and featured in the maiden speech of the MP for Blaydon
- Featuring in marketing campaigns both within and outside the region. Examples include the bus advertising campaign by the National Trust in 2005, and by commercial organisations, such as Eastern Airways, which featured the kites of the North East in the centrepiece article of its in-flight magazine in spring 2007
- The Project has featured in two films about the region's biodiversity riches, both of which have been used in contexts that should advance the role of the green environment in 'selling the region'. The first of these was made for the North East Regional Biodiversity Partnership. The second film was commissioned by One North East to support the work of the North East's Area Tourism Partnerships.

v) Stimulated the Local Economy

Bringing red kites back to the area has helped support people in the lower Derwent valley by contributing to the cumulative visitor economy of the local area and the wider region in a number of ways. Firstly, there are the simple financial benefits that are derived by local people because of the presence of the kites in the area. For example, it has been estimated that over its lifetime, the Northern Kites Project has stimulated financial activity that has supported 12.5 Full-time Equivalent jobs in the local economy (Milton, 2009). Furthermore, in terms of catalysing local economic activity, the Project is estimated to have generated at least £1.72 million of economic activity, the majority of this being filtered through to local companies and business people (Milton, 2009). Such economic activity of course has a large social benefit attached to it, and creates very significant social impact (see Case Study 5).

Since the kites began to breed in 2006, hundreds of thousands of people have enjoyed experiencing them, through a variety of media, and this iconic species is



Figure 14. The Red Kite Ramblers and Cllr. Mick Henry, Leader of Gateshead Council, at the Launch of the Red Kite Trail, May 2008

now being used to support tourism initiatives, such as the Red Kite Trail,

and the local economy. By attracting more visitors to the Derwent valley, and the region, and increasing the consequent spend by these visitors the Project has contributed to the cumulative visitor economy of the region. The lower Derwent valley and its range of visitor



facilities are now believed to attract around 250,000 visitors per annum (O’Keefe, 2009). The red kites have added considerably to the potential of the valley to increase this pattern of usage. By supporting local businesses’ use of red kites and the development of red kites products and services, such as: Northern Kite beer, Red Kite Cobbler (a speciality bread) and Red Kite buses, the Project has helped to increase the economic turnover of the Derwent valley.

- Northern Kites has helped to provide inspirational topics for environmental, conservation, wildlife and heritage education, within the context of the Project’s, and its associated Partners, programme of Lifelong Learning activities (see Case Study 2)
- By contributing to Gateshead and the region’s ability to attract visitors through the ‘creation’ and promotion of a major new environmental destination, Northern Kites has helped to ‘kick-start’ the process of realising the potential of the Derwent valley as a tourist attraction. Through their presence, the kites have made the Derwent valley a more attractive holiday destination for both day visitors and people who wish to stay in the area. This is highlighted by the fact that the kites, and the Derwent Walk Country Park, are now featured in one of the four One NorthEast commissioned tourism films that can be viewed online at <http://www.visitnortheastengland.com/>
- From a combination of visitor survey figures secured in 2008 in the National Trust’s Gibside Estate and the Derwent Walk Country Park, it was determined that over 100,000 people saw red kites in Gateshead’s Derwent valley during 2008
- Northern Kites has enabled a number of businesses in the region to use the red kites to further their business case. These range from large, multi-million pound companies, such as Go North East, through Small or Medium Enterprises (SMEs), such as Chromazone and Wylam Brewery, to micro-businesses like Alan Mould Art (Milton, 2009). Some companies have actually re-badged their whole company identity to use the kites, others have used the kites to infer the quality of, and secure profile for, their products and services by an association with the kites (see Case Study 5).

vi) Provided Engagement and Learning Opportunities

The Northern Kites Project has, through all aspects of its work with red kites, provided engagement and learning opportunities for volunteers and local people (see Case Study 4), a crucial element of delivering sustainable outcomes. It has delivered a social impact from an educational perspective by investing in work that sets out to change the behaviour of future generations and, as a result, secure benefits in the future, for both people and wildlife (Hills/Northern Kites, 2009).

“A fantastic project, particularly the educational aspects with schools.”

P. H., Winlaton Mill, Gateshead, *Kitewatch Visitor Book*, 2007





**Figure 15. Rowlands Gill
Community Primary's School Badge**

In setting out to achieve this, the Project formulated and delivered, a suite of innovative Lifelong Learning activities. It delivered: a broad-based programme of community presentations; adult education courses; Kite Awareness training for Partner and stakeholder employees; training for volunteers; an innovative Adopt-a-Kite scheme for school children; on-line support programmes, an easy to navigate 'two-click' website; and, a children's storybook (for more details see Case Study 3).

- By creating new and greater opportunities for volunteers and local community groups to engage in its work, Northern Kites was able to inspire local people. It gave people new social opportunities to grow their aspirations and primed their confidence to set up new ventures, in business or other areas of social action. One manifestation of this is the setting up of a new community organisation, Friends of Red Kites (FoRK), which will have the capacity to deliver future red kite work, 'for the people, by the people'
- By way of fostering inclusiveness, the Project made efforts to ensure that schools with special needs programmes were engaged in its environmental education work, there being two 'special needs' schools that adopted red kites as part of the Adopt-a-Kite scheme
- To deliver broad-based, popular information about science and the application of technology in the return of the red kites, Northern Kites, as part of the Newcastle science festivals in 2005, 2006 and 2007, delivered over 30 red kite safaris in Gateshead. More than 600 people attended these, nobody failed to see red kites
- The Project's presentations to community organisations took kite messages and an experience of the Project, into a wide variety of communities across the region. From Wooler to Middlesbrough and from South Shields to Haltwhistle, the Project delivered presentations to a wide variety of groups from a range of socio-economic and cultural backgrounds



- The Project was hugely successful in delivering a programme of people engagement events. For example, Kitewatch run in partnership with Gateshead Council in the Derwent Walk Country Park each summer, 2006-2008. This event offered



Figure 16. Members of the public at Kitewatch

visitors an excellent opportunity to see breeding red kites, supported by experts and local volunteers. The event was well known and attracted considerable numbers of visitors (over 24,000)

“I’ve just been to a FABULOUS talk about the Northern Kites Project at the Alnwick Wildlife Group’s January meeting. I never realised JUST how much has been achieved in, what, three years! ‘Tis truly awesome and inspiring and I felt a lump in my throat a number of times at the sheer magnitude of how much of a conservation message they are getting across to ‘normal’ folks who wouldn’t normally be interested in wildlife! If anyone gets the chance to see a talk about the Project then I urge them to do so – it’s fantastic to actually hear something positive and that IS working for once.... thank you EVERYBODY at Northern Kites for achieving so much in such a short space of time and making me, for one, feel that perhaps the tide is turning?”

Posted on Bird Forum 31/01/07, by G. O.

- Giedre Tomkeviciute, an economics student from Vilnius University, Lithuania, received £3,260 funding from the European Union, through the British Council, to work for Northern Kites during the summer of 2007. Her task was to undertake a project entitled, *Red Kites: For and About*. Through this, she documented in photographs, the Project’s red kite/people interface. She returned to the North East in December 2007, to make a presentation to local people about her work, this was the centrepiece of a high profile red kite night in the Council Chamber of Gateshead Civic Centre.

3.4 Raising Awareness, Making Engagements and Brokering Participation ~ Connecting Kites and People

There can be no social impact, without awareness. Before people react to, or are affected by something, at the most basic level, they first need to be made aware of it. In this sense,



public profile is an important stepping-stone towards creating a social impact and a measure of public awareness is a manifestation of the level of social impact that has been created. The level of public awareness of the red kites and the Northern Kites Project has been consistently high throughout the Project's existence. In a 2007 survey, commissioned by the North East Biodiversity Forum (Marketwise, 2007), into public attitudes to, and awareness of, 'biodiversity', the element of the region's wildlife that had the highest profile amongst the public was the red kites.

Public awareness levels of over 70% have been routinely recorded in Northern Kites visitor surveys and evaluation exercises. This level of awareness has been exceeded in the Project's core area, where figures of over 90% public awareness were recorded (see Case Study 1). This high level of awareness amongst the public has resulted from a combination of the Project's programme of people engagement activities, which are many and varied, its broad-based interpretive strategy, its business activities and its high media profile. The ways in which the Project has connected kites to people and vice versa have been novel and worked in a complementary fashion to reinforce and deliver kite messages, sometimes in unusual places. As a result, the messages are that much more memorable for the recipients. The approach has included using existing mechanisms, prompting others to integrate kite messages into their business plans and creating completely new ways to connect the story of the kites to people. For example, since April 2006, the Project has provided monthly articles for the *Rowlands Gill Directory*. This is a local business directory and, as the *Directory's* owner has noted, the articles have '*helped the magazine become an integral part of the community*'. This method of communicating has become highly prized by the community it targets. Displaying kite messages in other facilities has also proven effective. For example, across the region, over fifty '*The Story So Far...*' folders are located in a wide range of venues, from visitor centres to cafes. Each one of these folders does exactly what it says on the cover, providing a highly visual, story of how the Project has been delivered. The Red Kite buses, which in November 2008 won the national UK bus-branding Award for Go North East, have provided a completely novel way of connecting the kites with the people that use these services (see Case Study 5).

Images of red kites and information about the Project have been presented to the public in a wide variety of venues and facilities, in the lower Derwent valley and beyond. This approach means the red kite message reaches a range of demographics and target audiences, with reinforcing, complementary stories. Examples of locations with red kite displays and interpretation materials in the lower Derwent valley (an area of around 30 square kilometres) include: Gibside Tearoom; the Golden Lion pub; Lintzford Garden Centre; the Run of the Mill pub; Chaplin's Restaurant; the Black Horse pub; Tea for Two café in Rowlands Gill; bus shelters in Rowlands Gill and Winlaton Mill; the Thornley Woodlands Centre; the Swalwell Visitor Centre; observation hides; community centres; retail outlets, and schools in the area.



Partly in response to the Project's approach, an array of red-kite related products and services have been developed or have 'evolved' in the region over recent years. These products include: Red Kite buses; Northern Kite (the beer); Red Kite Cobbler (the bread); Kitewatch; *Let's Go Flying Kites* (children's picture storybook); red kite events; red kite artwork; the Red Kite Trail; the Northern Kites' website; the Adopt-a-Kite scheme for schools; red kite safaris; and, an award-winning University of the Third Age produced film about the Project. Each one of these mechanisms individually delivers a Project message or story, but collectively, across the suite of initiatives, they secure a social impact.



Section 4: Who Has Benefited?

The work of the Project has benefited a wide array of social groupings, from local people through to regional agencies. In addition to all of the Partners in the Project (see section 1.6), it has been assessed that significant social benefits from the work of the Project have been derived by the following groups and target audiences:

- Local residents of the communities in the lower Derwent valley, more specifically those living in the settlements of: Axwell Park, Barlow, Burnopfield, Chopwell, High Spen, Highfield, Lockhaugh, Rowlands Gill, Swalwell, Whickham, Winlaton and Winlaton Mill
- Local residents across Gateshead
- Schools and colleges who have accessed the educational resources via the Adopt-a-Kite scheme and the Project website, and have had the opportunity to be able to see red kites in the wild
- Visitors to the region, who have seen the kites as a selling point for the facilities and countryside of the Derwent valley, and as a consequence, are more aware of the other attractions that Gateshead and the region has to offer.
- Businesses involved in the 'tourist cluster' that is developing around the Red Kite Trail
- Local heritage, wildlife and environmental groups
- Local businesses out with the tourist businesses, which benefit from the increase in the local economy stimulated by the increased number of visitors to the area
- Volunteer Groups who have had increased opportunities to become involved in volunteering
- The Project Partners, which have benefited from increased profile, support and membership. For example, Gateshead's 'forward-thinking local council', as quoted in the RSPB's *Birds* magazine, January 2009 (Allen, 2009).

More generally, Northern Kites has brought Gateshead and the area of the Derwent valley, and the region, to the attention of a broad-based, audience across the country through its high media profile (see Case Study 3).

In relation to the launch of the Northern Kites' 'Reduce, Reuse, Recycle with Sprite the Kite' sustainability scheme...

"Caring for the environment and learning how our actions can make a difference is an important part of everyday life for everybody! Gateshead Council have worked in partnership with Northern Kites through our Local Agenda 21 Team, to develop an education package that can help pupils and their families learn about sustainability and encourage more sustainable actions by using the red kites as a guide."

Councillor Michael McNestry, Environment Portfolio holder for Gateshead Council,



Section 5 – Case Studies

Introduction

This suite of eight case studies detail some aspects of the Northern Kites Project's work towards meeting its objective of utilising the red kite reintroduction in Gateshead to secure social good and benefits. Each case study relates the circumstances that the Project addressed, the methodology employed, the work undertaken and the extent to which the Project believes it delivered in each area.

- Case Study 1: 'Red Kites – An Evaluation of their Social Impacts'
- Case Study 2: 'Learning to Fly... with Red Kites'
- Case Study 3: 'Northern Kites in the Spotlight'
- Case Study 4: 'Red Kites – by the People, for the People'
- Case Study 5: 'The Business of People'
- Case Study 6: 'Red Kites are Good for You!'
- Case Study 7: 'Kites in the Community'
- Case Study 8: 'Flying by Numbers'



Figure 17. The launch of the 'Sprite the Kite' sustainability leaflet (Reduce Reuse Recycle, with Sprite the Kite)



Case Study 1 – ‘Red Kites – An Evaluation of their Social Impacts’

Social Impacts Case Study

Background & Introduction

The function served by the environment within a community context, has been virtually neglected by social scientists or geographers. By contrast, community regeneration is an oft-visited theme. Most of the literature (Matthews, 1948; Coombes *et al.*, 1992; Fordham, 1995; Andolina *et al.* [in press]) in this field examines how the development of ‘community’ is affected through projects in the social sphere (such as neighbourhood sustainability and ethno-development). Northern Kites’ novel approach in an urban-fringe setting in the North East England, which set out to encourage environmental awareness, whilst improving the social network for communities in the lower Derwent valley, Gateshead and the wider region, provided a good opportunity for an investigation, which might address this imbalance in the literature.

The Northern Kites reintroduction programme, which was centred on Gateshead’s Derwent valley, in close proximity to a large urban population, offered the opportunity to study the social impacts of such a scheme. Furthermore, it was felt such a study might help develop methods for the evaluation of the potential social benefits to be derived from landscape-level wildlife projects, with Northern Kites as an example of a project that set out to create ‘new relationships’ between it, the spectacular wildlife it utilised, and local communities.

This case study attempts to show how the Project’s approach of using iconic wildlife to create major social impact and to increase support for the environment, as a side effect to its core ecological work, can also deliver benefits to local people, the local community and surrounding areas.

Objectives

The main objectives of this case study were to:

- Measure how a project, perceived as principally ‘environmental’, could also deliver social benefits
- Quantify from public feedback, how much social impact the Project has had in the lower Derwent valley, in particular
- Determine to what degree people feel that red kites have become ‘a force’ that supports increased social interaction in their community



Methodology

This case study is largely based upon the results of a six-month research project in the lower Derwent valley. This study (Lamb unpub., 2009) began in early June 2008. A number of mechanisms were used to collect data. These included:

- Public focus groups (at Highfield, Rowlands Gill, Winlaton and Winlaton Mill)
- Information gathering from visitors to the Gateshead Flower Show
- The distribution of questionnaires at social events and from local community outlets such as shops and post offices
- The making available of a short questionnaire through the *Rowlands Gill Directory* (a community based publication that is delivered free to all houses in the Rowlands Gill area) and via the *Evening Chronicle's 'Go Green'*, on-line service.

The principle tools used for recording data and feedback were a:

- Short questionnaire (comprising six questions with simple 'yes/no' responses or '1-5' category choice questions, which provided 'rankable' answers)
- Long questionnaire (comprising around 30 questions with some simple 'yes/no' responses as well as more detailed category choice questions, that included individual respondent, socio-economic and lifestyle information)

The contents of these questionnaires were formulated with advice from Gateshead Council's Social Cohesion Unit and the Gateshead Strategic Partnership. They are included at Appendices 3a and 3b. The shorter questionnaire allowed the respondent to provide contact details for follow-up work, during which the longer questionnaire could be completed. All completed questionnaires were returned to the freepost address provided, for the purpose of the survey by Northern Kites.

The data generated was input to SPSS (the Statistical Package for Social Sciences), a statistical programme, which facilitated the data analysis and its representation in graphic and tabular formats, as well as helping to make it cross-referable to other data sets. This package allowed easier comparison of data sets (as both frequencies and percentages) drawn from the different zones within which respondents lived. The system facilitated the statistical testing of the data (using 't-tests'), to determine whether it was representative of the sample populations. The system also allowed for the degree of correlation between variables to be compared, thereby highlighting how these might relate to one another (using Spearman's rank test of correlation).

The majority of the larger questionnaires were completed at focus groups and events, or at one-to-one follow-up sessions with individual respondents. The longer questionnaire asked a



number of confidential questions relating to socio-economic characteristics, such as personal background, income and sexuality. This additional information allowed for an analysis of the data, according to socio-economic and demographic groupings. This longer survey gave scope for respondents to document more of their 'emotional' responses to the kites' return and an opportunity for people to express how the kites made them feel, and through this, connect such responses to social wellbeing.

Results

The shorter questionnaires were mainly completed in and around the 'core Project area'. To provide a rigorous dataset of responses, 500 survey forms were distributed in 10 zones (50 surveys to addresses in each 'zone') in the lower Derwent valley, using a 'random stratified method' (Kitchen & Tate, 2000). From this distribution, 227 completed surveys were generated (a 45% return rate). A cross comparison of the results from this sample, with those from the wider distribution of questionnaires, indicated that there was no statistical difference in respondent's survey answers from either approach, and that all responses to the survey could therefore be legitimately considered as 'one data set'.

The survey approach secured a relatively large dataset for such public sampling exercises. Combining results from both the large and small questionnaires, a total data set of 926 completed survey responses was secured. The data comprised 832 completed short questionnaires and 94 of the larger, more detailed, surveys.

Awareness of Northern Kites and the Red Kites

The results from the short survey questionnaire indicate that 89.6% of the 832 respondents were aware of the Northern Kites Project prior to their filling in the survey. A more detailed, area-specific analysis of the responses to the questionnaire, showed that amongst those living in the core Project area of the lower Derwent valley, 93.4% of respondents were aware of the Project prior to filling in the questionnaire.

The Red Kites' Impact with the Public

Over 84% of respondents to the short questionnaire, reported that they had, at that stage, already seen a red kite in the North East of England.

The public approval ratings for the work of the Project were very high. The questionnaire asked, 'Do you think that bringing red kites back to the North East, was a bad, poor, okay, good or great idea', 79.9% said it was a 'great idea' with a further, 17.5% replying that it was



'good idea' (97.5% of respondent's answers falling into one of the two upper categories). Less than 0.25% of respondents considered it a 'poor or bad idea'.

How kites make people feel and behave were key to the successful delivery of the Project's social objectives. When asked, 'How does seeing a red kite make you feel', 95% of respondents replied that the kites made them feel, 'good' or 'great'. When asked about how the Project and the return of the red kites had affected their perceived 'quality of life', 28% reported 'no change', but 70% of respondents reported they felt the kites had materially improved their 'quality of life'.

Red Kites as 'Social Glue'

An unexpected effect of the return of red kites is the degree to which people have talked about the birds, shared in their return with other people and consequently, found that the birds have acted as 'social glue'. This concept was tested with a question in the short survey to find out whether respondents believed that the return of the kites had helped local people become more interactive with one another (e.g. using the birds as a topic of conversation or as a conversation opener). There was a strongly positive response to this question, with over 81% of respondents agreeing, or strongly agreeing, that this was the case.



Figure 18. The local community coming together to enjoy red kites

A more detailed analysis of the results of this question, showed that 26.5% of people strongly agreed with the proposition, and a further 54.9% said that they had seen a positive change, because of the kites. Looking in more detail at this in terms of the respondents' place of residence, revealed that 86% of those living in the lower Derwent

valley, believed that there had been an improvement in social interaction since the kites' reintroduction. Less than 2% of people replying to the questionnaires did not believe that the kites had contributed to a greater degree of interaction between local people.

An analysis of the long questionnaire results indicated that both residents in the Derwent valley and visitors from outside the area believed that the reintroduction, the products relating to the red kites and the birds themselves, had all been very positive for the North East.

Summary information from the larger questionnaire revealed a raft of positive views associated with the kites.



- Over 92% of people, thought that the red kites had ‘added value’ to their local area.
- More than 82% of people were aware of kite community events, indicating a positive relationship between an awareness of the Project and community awareness
- Over 47% of respondents were aware of red kite articles in the *Rowlands Gill Directory*. This indicated that nearly half of the sample population had used the *Directory* to receive information about the kites’ progress. This may be significant for how projects, such as Northern Kites, undertake an interaction with people who may be housebound, or have limitations to their mobility
- Over 73% of the local community was ‘very satisfied’ with the Northern Kites Project and the progress that had been made through it.
- 89% of people believed the red kites had contributed to the regeneration of the lower Derwent valley, adding to the value of the vicinity with products that promote the bird’s return, but had also enriched the environment with their return
- 85% of respondents felt that the red kites had made people more proud of their local area and 95% of people said that they had gone out of their way to have a conversation about, or interact with someone in the community, because of the red kites

Public Awareness of Red Kite ‘Products’

Table 1, which is drawn from responses to one of the questions in the larger questionnaire, indicates respondent’s levels of awareness of various ‘products’ associated with the red kites (from a sample size of 94).

Products associated with red kites/ the Northern Kites Project	% awareness
Red Kite Buses	96.7
Northern Kite (the beer)	47.3
Red Kite Cobbler (the bread)	13.2
Kitewatch event	76.9
Lets Go Flying Kites (children’s picture story book)	44.0
Red Kite artwork	49.5
The Red Kite Trail	86.8
Northern Kites website	49.5
The Adopt-a-kite scheme for schools	70.3
Red Kite events	82.4

Table 1: Awareness of various ‘products’ associated with the red kites

Some of the positive effects that respondents ascribed to the red kites were: the development of an infrastructure; improvements in general quality of life; adding to local facilities; and, delivering educational benefits. In addition, almost 82% of people responding felt the kites and the Project had contributed to the regeneration of the area.



Northern Kites' own ongoing, awareness monitoring processes, undertaken at events and other activities over its five year lifetime, indicate that within 5km of the Project's central point, an average of 81% of people questioned were aware of Northern Kites, this fell to 66% within a 10km radius, to 63% (within 15km) and 55% at over 20km (see Case Study 8).

Analysis and Discussion

The results of the study convey the degree to which Northern Kites has been successful in fostering increased social interaction, creating an effective 'social glue' that helps bind the local community. Debord (1994) used the term 'spectacle' in order to describe how society creates dramatic imagery to promote social relationships. Northern Kites has deliberately created a spectacle using the iconic red kites in order to promote social relationships between the kites and people and between people in local communities. These results show how local communities and people have actively and positively embraced the reintroduction programme. Community projects can develop in many ways, but as the data collected shows, Northern Kites has developed what may be a uniquely high level of public approval of its reintroduction programme.

The public awareness and approval ratings shown by the results of the short survey questionnaire indicate an extremely high awareness of, and approval rating for, the work of the Northern Kites Project. This may be based on the fact that many respondents felt they were a 'part' of the work of the Project, or felt that they had personally benefited from the kites' return. The fact that over 84% of respondents to the survey, reported that they had already seen a red kite in the North East of England, indicates that Northern Kites' aspiration to make spectacular wildlife, widely and easily available to large numbers of people, as a way of demonstrating the delivery of social good, has been largely met. The impact the kites have made on local people was found to be extraordinarily high.

"It was necessary for this to be a properly-orchestrated professional effort if it was to succeed. Good publicity was essential to get local feeling on side, so that the general mood was upbeat and supportive and no negative destructive element tolerated. Much effort has gone into making everyone feel involved in whatever way they wanted, to be proud of a project they feel is their own."

'Respondent 26'



“Because they are amazing birds of prey. It is good to introduce children to local wildlife and get them interested in the local environment and the importance of looking after it, because they are the next generation. Plus it encourages greater social interaction and understanding”

‘Respondent 7’ from the Winlaton Focus Group

At its commencement, the Project was in a unique position. Funds were allocated through the partnership to develop social good by promoting red kites, and to promote red kites by developing social connections. Over 69% of respondents to the surveys were aware of the use of partnership within the Project. There are many examples of how the Project went about this and many ways of in which it reinforced its messages. For example, the Red Kite buses used transport links to raise awareness whilst encouraging, sustainable, public mobility. Also the Red Kite Trail (which exists largely on established rights of way, such as the Derwent Walk) highlights locations where red kites can be seen by walkers accessing the countryside; the Adopt-a-Kite scheme involves schools and encouraged young people to be more aware of their surroundings, as does, more generally, the Northern Kites’ website. These methods of helping people recognise red kites and ‘their’ bird’s value to them, helped the work of the Project, and also helped to promote the species and issues relating to it, across a much broader base than had been achieved by other reintroduction schemes in similar timescales.

Northern Kites provided a distinctive perspective on the prevailing culture of society, that some commentators might argue, exists today. The Project aimed to engage communities in its work in an informed and interactive way, by raising awareness about environmental issues and sustainability.

Kites Addressing Social Exclusion

Social exclusion can be described as ‘a state of being that is perceived as being where people are outside of, or marginalized from, mainstream social relations and the attendant resources and opportunities that this involves’, (Cloke *et al.*, 2005). The approach of Northern Kites could be described as ‘inclusive’, from a humanistic, geographical perspective. It aimed, wherever possible, to connect people to opportunities, through the kites. The Project listed the improvement of emotional wellbeing amongst its desired ‘deliverables’, by encouraging people to interact with each other and to take exercise whilst enjoying the kites; this, to some degree, can be seen as combating social exclusion. An analysis of data, using a Spearman-Rank test of correlation, indicated that there was a significant positive correlation between peoples’ opinions of bringing the red kites back to the North East and an increased interaction with local people.



Vohs *et al.* (2007) discussed how an individual's self-view affects their standing within society and their own perception of social inclusion and exclusion. If an individual has low self-esteem, they are less likely to express opinions and feel, within themselves, 'excluded'. This highlights the fact that social exclusion can be contributed to by a lack of communication with others. The findings from the Northern Kites Social Impact Study indicates that there was a correlation between awareness of the Project, red kites and people's social interactions. It seems reasonable to conclude that red kites, as promoted by Northern Kites, can help to promote social inclusion.

Red Kites in the Wider North East Context

A survey conducted by the North East Biodiversity Forum (Marketwise, 2007), reported on public attitudes towards biodiversity. Mostly, this showed that 'respondents to the survey had a positive attitude towards the natural environment' but little knowledge. The feature of wildlife with which respondents to this survey were most aware, was red



Figure 19. People appreciating the red kites as natural assets

kites. Respondents were asked to cite three 'natural assets' of importance to them in their local area and of importance to the North East as a whole. Several respondents cited red kites as an asset to the North East. Eighty-eight respondents to the survey referred to deliberate interventions to increase biodiversity, including the reintroduction of red kites in Gateshead.

Burgess (2005), discussed the Government's campaign for sustainable behaviour, 'Are you doing your bit?' This process informed all of Northern Kites' work, as rather than just a broader promotion of its specific red kite work, the Project targeted communities with wider environmental messages. The success of this is demonstrated not just by the Project's generic work, but through the awareness that has developed around its 'side' projects e.g. by the 96% awareness level of the Red Kite bus that runs through the lower Derwent valley, which has positive implications for the promotion of sustainable transport. Northern Kites emphasised and signposted people to the existence of 'red kite products', in order to gain recognition for the community to promote 'their' own wildlife. These products are used within the community, for the community. This is one of the ways in which Northern Kites has



differed from other species reintroduction programmes. It has used its community-based resources to filter messages out into surrounding areas. As a result, ancillary aspects of the Project's work, such as the promotion of tourism, began to develop.

Northern Kites has actively promoted public awareness of the Project, and then allowed the public to form its own view of the work delivery, based on this knowledge. Awareness of environmental issues is increasingly important today as in the past *'people have simply not known that such fundamental matters as the [environmental] integrity of the communities they live in and the health of the planet itself are at stake'*, (French, 1993). Therefore, the high level of awareness within the lower Derwent valley of red kites and the Project's work, as well as in the wider region itself, demonstrates the positive social impact that an environmental project such as Northern Kites can have.

Conclusions

The Project has delivered a much greater social impact than might otherwise have been possible without its people-facing approach. For Northern Kites, engaging and involving people from the local community was a powerfully effective way of securing a foundation of real support. If this is effectively done, the community itself becomes a mechanism for generating a wider understanding and support base from both within and without that community. Hence, a virtual and virtuous 'rippling out' of social goods and benefits occurs. This process has helped contribute to the following social impacts:

Personal Development

- Throughout its lifetime, the Project undertook its work in a way that facilitated the personal growth of the many people involved in its delivery. Examples include the Northern Kites volunteers (see Case Study 4), many of whom increased their knowledge of kites and the environment, and from that base they developed the self-confidence to share their passion and enthusiasm for the birds with others

Social Cohesion

- The way the Project placed people at its core catalysed change within the communities to which it was delivering. Engaging people from these communities inspired others to learn about the kites and support the Project, ultimately empowering those self-same communities
- Over 95% of people said that they had gone out of their way to have a conversation about, or interact with someone in the community, because of the red kites. A powerful example of how wildlife can act as 'social glue'
- Northern Kites linked existing community networks by using the kites as a positive connective force, between organisations and people of disparate backgrounds and beliefs, providing them with something that everybody could be proud of. Almost



98% of respondents to the surveys said that the return of the red kites to the North East was either a 'good or great' idea. There are few aspects of modern society, which exhibit such a powerfully unifying effect

Community Empowerment and Self-determination

- Many kite enthusiasts developed new friendships through the kites. In developing their expertise about their kites, they become confident enough to support the establishment of a new community-based organisation, that will, go on to use the kites to strengthen existing, and establish new social bonds
- Northern Kites, as a community-orientated project, built a strong support base across and throughout the settlements and communities of the lower Derwent valley. This was achieved by the reinforcement of messages, dissemination of information from many directions, and through use of through red kite interpretation materials, event promotion and community involvement, and in red kite themed activities

Health and Wellbeing

- Respondents to the questions unequivocally not only believed that the kites had contributed to an improvement in their quality of life (70%), but also made them feel 'good' or 'great' (95%)

Local Image and Identity

- It is very evident that people in the lower Derwent valley feel very strongly about their red kites and see the red kites as something that helps to define, not just their area, but the whole of the region. Over 92% of people surveyed, believed that the red kites had 'added value' to their local area, 89% of people felt kites had contributed to the regeneration of the area, and 85% felt that the red kites had made people more proud of their local area. A powerful, and perhaps irresistible, statement of approval. Whilst this effect was strongest at the heart of the project area, the public awareness of the Projects' approval was still quite discernable and relatively high well outside of this area.

Tuan (1976) states, '*humanistic geography achieves an understanding of the human world by studying people's relation with nature, their geographical behaviours, as well as their feeling and ideas as regards to space and place*'. Tuan's idea of 'humanistic geography' relies upon and promotes the development of a 'social society'. Projects such as Northern Kites, which support such a humanistic approach to geography, help to define communities by their space and identities and, very clearly, make a significant contribution to the efficacy of such a model.



Case Study 2 - 'Learning to Fly... with Red Kites' Lifelong Learning and Education Case Study

Background & Introduction

Northern Kites delivered a Lifelong Learning Programme (2004-2009) that provided opportunities for people of all ages and backgrounds to learn about, and experience, red kites and the environment. As the Project's urban-fringe setting offered unrivalled opportunities for the delivery of such work, the Northern Kites' Lifelong Learning Programme was central to the Project's successful delivery.



Figure 20. Children making red kite colour cards

The development of this programme of works was guided by the objectives set in the 'people' element of the Project (see Appendix 4). A range of activities, initiatives and schemes were created to deliver the Lifelong Learning Programme, targeting both formal and informal educational settings (Hills/Northern Kites, 2009). A suite of red kite themed interpretation and education materials were developed to support the delivery of these. This case study highlights the social impacts of the Project's Lifelong Learning programme.

Objectives

The objectives of this case study were to:

- Collate the people engagement figures of the education initiatives and schemes in the Lifelong Learning Programme (2004-2009)
- Relate how these achievements have delivered social impacts for people and local communities who participated in the Lifelong Learning Programme.



Methodology

Throughout the delivery of the Lifelong Learning Programme, engagement figures, feedback, quotes, and comments were documented by the Project. Schools involved with the Adopt-a-Kite Scheme completed evaluation forms in May 2007 and July 2008. In addition, all red kite awareness training course attendees between March 2006 and March 2008, completed feedback forms.

Results

Over the period July 2004 to February 2009, the Northern Kites Lifelong Learning programme was delivered using a range of approaches and elements, these included:

- The Northern Kites Adopt-a-Kite Scheme
- Bespoke Northern Kites Information Packs (for farmers, children, teenagers and other target audiences)
- Presentations and assemblies to schools
- A novel sustainability scheme, 'Reduce, Reuse and Recycle with Sprite the Kite', which used red kites as an example to show children and their parents how they can live more sustainable lifestyles.
- Community presentations to groups across the region
- Red kite themed adult education courses
- "Let's go flying kites..." a picture storybook by local author/illustrator Jules Burnett
- An on-line red kite education programme, KIDS4KITES
- The Northern Kites Student Research Menu
- Kite awareness training to staff and volunteers of various environmental organisations and businesses across the region.



Figure 21. Washingwell Community Primary School Assembly

The Northern Kites Adopt-a-Kite Scheme

The Northern Kites 'Adopt-a-Kite' scheme for schools was pivotal in engaging a wider audience and generating support for the red kites (Hills/Northern Kites 2009), with enthusiastic children taking home stories of 'their' kite to parents and guardians. Through its



programme of Education Packs, school presentations, on-line support and termly red kite updates, the Adopt-a-Kite scheme provided learning and development opportunities within schools and improved education resources and facilities. The scheme assisted greatly with children's understanding of the environment. Through the scheme, the red kites reached over 36,000 thousand children in Adopt-a-Kite schools, between October 2004 and January 2009. By early 2009, 107 schools in the region (over 50 in Gateshead alone) had adopted red kites, and since the kites began to breed in 2006, each newly, wing-tagged chick was eagerly adopted. Nonetheless, a waiting list of schools wanting to be involved was ever-present. As red kites were integrated into the Curriculum by teachers, this helped develop a new community interest in the environment and allowed young people the opportunity to 'make a difference', by spreading the word about the kites and how important they are in terms of the local green environment.

Engagement Figures from the Northern Kites' Lifelong Learning Programme

The various lifelong learning elements delivered to different sectors and target audiences.

- Over 170 schools from across North East England engaged with Northern Kites through the Adopt-a-Kite Scheme, and this work led to the development of KIDS4KITES and a red kite-themed sustainability initiative. In totality, these education initiatives provided opportunities for over 60,000 young people and their families to learn about red kites and the environment
- Red kite themed adult education courses were delivered to eleven organisations across the region, educating over 180 professionals on red kite activities and behaviour
- Over 275 community groups were engaged with the Project through a programme of community talks, a community outreach programme (named Community Kite Clusters, see Case Study 7) and the Red Kites and Health Benefits Initiative (See Case Study 6)
- Over 150 landowners and managers were provided with education materials through the distribution of farmers' Red Kite Information Packs
- A film about Northern Kites, made by the University of the Third Age, was seen by over 5,000 people in the region between 2005 and 2009
- Over 100 volunteers joined the RSPB volunteer scheme to assist in the delivery of all aspects of the Project, with a particular focus on the lifelong learning programme
- At April 2009, local University students had completed ten red kite research projects, stimulated by the production of the Red Kite Research Menu



Scheme or Activity Evaluation Summary

Summary information from the evaluation of the formal education support provided to Adopt-a-Kite schools revealed that:

- 96% of respondents said that the Northern Kites' Education Pack was helpful in delivering the National Curriculum
- 92% of schools felt that the Adopt-a-Kite scheme had successfully provided their pupils with the opportunity to develop a relationship with red kites
- 100% of schools indicated that pupil's awareness of red kites had increased following their involvement with the Adopt-a-Kite Scheme
- Three quarters of participating schools incorporated kites into school assemblies, half of teachers said they included kites in lesson plans, 38% used the kites in other ways, for example, in ecology or nature clubs
- Prior to adopting a red kite, almost 75% of pupils had little or no awareness of red kites, after adopting a kite, nearly 75% had a high of awareness of red kites
- 88% of teachers were able to use red kites to include local wildlife and environmental issues in the classroom
- 67% of teachers used red kites to help encourage sustainable actions by pupils

"We have just completed a tour of UK red kite projects. Of all the places we have been your 'education to the public' package has been the best. There may be all sorts of issues regards raptors, but to us, educating the public and the children is very, very important. We hope that in the future, the Aberdeen Kites Project follows your example."

Received by email from Liz and Bill Robertson-Aberdeen. 10/06/08

Red Kite Awareness Training Course Feedback.

- 97% of all course attendees indicated that their knowledge and awareness of red kites had increased after attending the course

Analysis and Discussion

The lifelong learning programme engaged tens of thousands of people across North East England with red kites, ultimately raising awareness, educating people and encouraging them to take action.

Raising Awareness of Red Kites, the Northern Kites Project and the Environment

Raising awareness of red kites was an integral part of the lifelong learning programme. All initiatives and schemes that were developed included an element of awareness raising for the



intended target audience, whether these were pupils in a school or members of a community group.

The Adopt-a-Kite Scheme proved invaluable in achieving this, pupils in the 'adopting schools' showed an increase in awareness of kites, as indicated by the evaluation forms completed by their teachers. Awareness raising did not stop with pupils. School staff and pupils' families were made aware of the kites, as messages were shared with parents on children's return home. This was evident from comments received:

"When I first began to talk to the children about the red kites they were incredibly eager to share their sightings with me, now I have parents stopping me to do the same."

Claire Guthrie, Adopt-a-Kite Contact Teacher, Shotley Bridge Junior School.

Pupils and their families have also developed a sense of ownership with their adopted kite, referring to the bird as 'our' kite. This impacted positively on schools and their surrounding communities. This point was very forcibly emphasised when one kite was found illegally poisoned and the news of its death was relayed to its adopting school. Staff, pupils and their families were horrified that someone could have done this to 'their kite', as was summed up by one pupil who, in front of TV cameras, said:



"How am I supposed to respect a grown up that has done that to my kite?"

8-year old pupil of Winlaton West Lane Primary School, on the announcement of the death of the schools adopted red kite, 'Flash'

Figure 22. The 'Winlaton' Phoenix unveiled to pupils of Winlaton West Lane Primary School

This story led the local TV news on the night of its announcement, led to a discussion of the issues at the most senior levels of Government and helped hugely with raising awareness about persecution threats to red kites. Notably, there have been no further known persecution incidents involving red kites in the North East.

Awareness raising effort extended to community groups through a programme of talks and outreach work that engaged thousands of people from over 250 groups, and through training delivered for eleven regional organisations. The demand for a 'red kite talk' was high. Community presentations however, were only made to groups willing to develop an ongoing relationship with the Project (i.e. receive additional updates on the kites, post presentation)



and this approach resulted in audiences being empowered and providing support to the Project.

The resulting increased level of awareness demonstrated that the kites had stimulated a high level of interest and were providing a social activity for community involvement. Making people aware of the kites and their local environment also provided a source of enjoyment for people across the region, allowing people to develop a sense of place and identity.

"I really cannot believe people used to kill these beautiful creatures they are amazing!"

A.W., Year Six, Shotley Bridge Junior School, 2008

Educating People of All Ages and Backgrounds Using Red Kites

The schemes and initiatives developed in the lifelong learning programme contributed to the educational development of both children and adults. Nursery, primary and secondary schools were all involved with the kites. Education resource packs produced for schools adopting kites, on-line resources in the KIDS4KITES scheme and the 'Reduce, Reuse and Recycle with Sprite the Kite' initiative provided learning opportunities on red kites, wildlife and the environment for schools



Figure 23. Red kite stained-glass windows in Fellside School's gazebo

across the region. The resources and activities developed by provided by Northern Kites proved useful in the modern classroom, as they were designed to support delivery of the National Curriculum, using mechanisms such as interactive white-boards, and to provide an enjoyable experience for those participating, which helped develop their creativity.

Adults have also been encouraged to participate in activities that have provided education and training opportunities for people in local communities. Information resources have been distributed to numerous community groups including farmers and landowners who often had their perceptions of red kites challenged with the educational materials provided. Over 150 farmers received bespoke Information Packs, and with the resultant increased support from landowners leading to them permitting access to their land to monitor the kites and their excitement of hosting nesting kites, this indicates support for the Project and potentially changed attitudes.



Motivating People to Take Action

Relationships developed between communities and the kites have encouraged actions by people of all ages. Pupils in Adopt-a-Kite schools have been encouraged to undertake sustainable actions in school and at home while schools inspired by the scheme have included kites in their design and structures. Examples include the red kite themed gazebo at Fellside Primary School and the work of artists who have done work in school grounds. Such work will influence generations of school children to come.

Rowlands Gill Community Primary School (an Adopt-a-Kite school since the scheme began in 2004) has included the kites in many aspects of the school's development. Kites have been incorporated into the social and physical fabric of the school's new premises (opened in 2007) featuring in the school's logo, letterhead, uniform-badge and seating areas. Artists have been commissioned by the school to work with pupils to create kite themed artwork including a wildlife totem pole, mosaic and collage. Encouraged by their involvement with the kites and daily sightings of the birds overhead, the school and its pupils have hosted many kite related launches and activities organised by Northern Kites and several of its partner and stakeholder organisations. These include the launch of the Adopt-a-Kite Scheme, the 'Sprite the Kite' sustainability initiative, Go North East's 'Red Kite' bus, the RSPB's 2008 Bird of Prey campaign and a children's red kite book. Head teacher Hannah Martin emphasised their commitment to taking action:

"Through the school's activities and involvement with red kites, pupils have learned not only about red kites and their reintroduction, but also about local wildlife and the environment. They have learned what actions people can take to make a difference in looking after their local area and that small steps can 'make a difference'. The school plans to continue its involvement with the kites, delivering the kites and sustainability initiative and encouraging continued environmental action for years to come."



Figure 24. Wooden Red Kites seat at Rowlands Gill Community Primary School

Other organisations and businesses have been motivated to take action through the lifelong learning programme one of the outputs being the creation of the *Let's go flying, kites...* children's storybook. Jules Burnett was commissioned to produce this book by Go North East



after the launch of their Red Kite bus. Copies of the book were distributed to all the Adopt-a-Kite schools in the region, courtesy of the bus company.

Conclusions

The Northern Kites lifelong learning programme has contributed to the following social impacts:

- Personal growth for people of all ages in local communities by providing enjoyable educational opportunities that have stimulated interest, changed and challenged attitudes, helped to build new skills and self-confidence to participate in making a difference
- Provided the 'glue' for social cohesion connecting and inspiring people of all ages and backgrounds while improving perceptions of people's quality of life and place
- Empowering communities to take action and become involved in local projects
- Promoting positive perceptions of local identity and image by connecting people and wildlife in their area.

"I loved the red kites!" - V. C.

"I think it is a very nice thing to help keep these birds alive and free." - S. W.

"I hope that no more of the red kites get killed in this country. I know they won't because you take such good care of the red kites." - K. L. S.

"When we came with the school we saw three red kites they were all beautiful." - J. E.

"I think it's great how they are being introduced back into Gateshead and other parts of the UK." - B.D.

Heworth Grange School, Year 7 pupils' comments following a trip to Kitewatch, 2007



Case Study 3 – ‘Northern Kites in the Spotlight’ *Red Kites in the Media Case Study*

Background & Introduction

All red kite reintroductions projects prior to Northern Kites had had a relatively high media profile around the time of the release of the young birds into the wild. To ensure that the

'people aspects' of Northern Kites' work were to be fully realised (see Appendix 4), it was key to delivering the Project's aspirations that the Project maintained a high visibility and awareness amongst the general public, not just specialists interest groups, such as birdwatchers and countryside devotees, throughout its life. To help



Figure 25. Northern Kites' Visitor & Events Officer giving a radio interview

achieve this, at the outset of the Projects' work, the Partnership established a Communications Working Group whose aim was to ensure that the Project maintained such a profile in the public's perception. The purpose of this was to build a base of community support and a better understanding of broader environmental themes, by developing an affinity for the kites amongst local people.

The aim of this case study is to show how the achievement of the Project's high media profile has helped deliver some of its social impacts and connected its work to a wider suite of communities across the region than would otherwise have been possible, without it.

Objectives

The objectives of this case study were to:

- Document the different aspects of and the scale of the Project's media profile
- Summarise the range of media connections, and assign a value to these
- Try and identify the social impacts that have been delivered as a consequence of the high profile nature of the Project



Methodology

Over the period 2004-2008, all of the Project Partners monitored the press and other media for mentions of the Project. This activity was particularly focused after the circulation of media releases. An extensive library of press cuttings and magazine articles was maintained by the Project and this information was entered onto a computer database, which recorded the date, time and type of publications featuring articles. A similar database of TV and radio broadcasts was maintained by the Project.

Results

Print Media Coverage

Articles about the Northern Kites Project were logged in the following publications (Table 2):

Table 2: Diversity of press coverage of Northern Kites

Newspapers			
Local Press	Out of Area Press	National	International
<i>The Journal Evening Chronicle</i> <i>Northern Echo</i> <i>Sunderland Echo</i> <i>Darlington & Stockton Times</i> <i>Hexham Courant</i> <i>Gateshead Herald & Post</i> <i>Sunday Sun</i> <i>Teesdale Mercury</i> <i>Northumbrian Gazette</i> <i>Teesdale Gazette, Chester-le-Street Advertiser</i> <i>Ponteland News</i> <i>South Durham News</i> <i>South Shields Gazette</i> <i>Hartlepool Mail</i> <i>Northumberland Gazette</i> <i>Metro (Newcastle)</i>	<i>Cumberland News</i> <i>Business Echo</i> <i>Dewsbury Advertiser</i> <i>Evening News</i> <i>Morning News</i> <i>Hull Daily Mail</i> <i>Liverpool Daily Post</i> <i>York Evening Press</i> <i>Metro (London)</i> <i>Scarborough</i> <i>Shropshire News</i> <i>Southern Daily Echo</i> <i>Burton Mail</i> <i>The Courier</i> <i>The Lincoln Target</i> <i>AFP Newsbrief</i> <i>Belfast News</i> <i>Western Mail</i> <i>Wrexham Evening Post</i> <i>Yorkshire Post</i>	<i>The Daily Telegraph</i> <i>The Guardian</i> <i>The Times</i>	<i>The Khaleej Times (Dubai)</i> <i>Pakistani Business News (Pakistan)</i> <i>The Recorder (South Africa)</i>
Magazines			
Local Press	Out of Area Press	National	International
<i>The Northumbrian</i> <i>Durham Town & Country</i> <i>North-east Life</i> <i>The Source Rowlands</i> <i>Gill Directory</i> <i>Chester-le-Street Advertiser</i> <i>Culture</i> <i>Living North</i>		<i>Women's Weekly</i> <i>Birds</i> <i>Birdwatching</i> <i>Birdwatch</i> <i>BBC Wildlife</i> <i>Natural World</i> <i>National Trust Magazine</i> <i>English Nature Magazine</i> <i>Eastern Airways (in-flight magazine)</i>	<i>Birds (Japan)</i>



Based on an analysis of Northern Kites' press cuttings file, which is extensive, but not exhaustive, it was determined that between September 2003 and December 2008, the work of the Northern Kites Project was featured in over 360 articles in the press (at a minimum). On a year-by-year basis, this amounted to: 2003 - 15 items; 2004 - 60 items; 2005 - 59 items; 2006 - 72 items; 2007 - 100 items, and 2008 - 55 items.

This amounted to an average of more than 60 articles per year over a five and a half year 'media lifetime' of the Project, i.e. between September 2003 and December 2008; 1.29 articles per week. The extent and range of coverage achieved over this period was also both broad and impressive as is shown in Table 2.

Television and Radio Coverage

By April 2009, the Project and the North East's red kites had featured in 49 television transmissions and 36 radio broadcasts, both regional and national. Included amongst these were a prime time, Tyne Tees TV documentary, national TV coverage through the BBC's *Animals 24/7* programme and the Project featured in two broadcasts of a national BBC Radio Four documentary, on 3 and 8 January 2009. Future national TV coverage was timetabled for summer and autumn 2009, and early 2010 (including a piece for future transmission on the BBC's *The One Show*). All of these highlight the social importance and value of the red kites to the North East region.



Figure 26. 'Northern Kites' television documentary

Northern Kites was a Tyne Tees documentary produced by Working Wonders TV Ltd. *Northern Kites* told the story of the region's red kite reintroduction programme and its impact upon local schools, businesses and the countryside. This was narrated by Tyne Tees News presenter, Jonathon Morrell, and was screened in the ITV Tyne-Tees area on 27 March 2007. With an audience of over

240,000 in the North East, the documentary was the jointly most-watched regional broadcast in England, during the week of its transmission. On Saturday 23 February 2008, it was featured in the factual and documentaries category of the 2007 Royal Television Society Awards for the North East and Borders.



Local Applications of Red Kite Media Information

In addition to the more widely circulated print media, the red kites and the Project, have also appeared in over 20 articles and features in Gateshead's *Council News*, the Council's bi-monthly, community magazine. This has helped to 'promote' the Council's services and to raise awareness of the kites with local residents and helped to connect people and communities to kites across the Gateshead Council area.

The way in which the Project's press coverage has benefited the profile of Project partners is well illustrated by looking at how the Gateshead area and Gateshead Council specifically have been referenced in articles about the Project. Within the larger set of 360 articles, there were 235 generic references to the 'Gateshead' area, with 97 specific references to Gateshead Council in the articles.

Other Media Coverage

A considerable amount of additional media coverage was secured through web-based systems, including articles on: Bird Guides, RSPB On-line, Bird Forum, Dawn Internet edition, Yahoo News and many of the other web-based platforms of the print media listed in Table 2. In addition to this, the Project was also very successful in securing links to its website from other organisation's web platforms, with over 25 links being in existence by the end of December 2008.

Analysis and Discussion

Local Press Detail & Analysis

In the North East region, over the 'media lifetime' of the Project, Northern Kites secured 73 articles in the *Newcastle Journal* and 42 articles in the *Evening Chronicle*. These publications are the two main print-media publications in the 'City area' of the North East region. The *Journal* newspaper has a readership of 118,000 adults per day; the *Evening Chronicle* has a readership of 250,000 adults per day (NJC readership figures for 2009). If all readers of the respective papers had read the red kite related articles, then theoretically this amounts to 8,614,000 people reading articles in the *Journal* and 10,500,000 people in the *Evening Chronicle*. Even if just 10% of the readership registered the relevant red kite articles, that amounts to a total 'readership registration' of red kites of over 1.9 million in the lifetime of the Project through these two publications alone.



Conclusions

'Awareness raising' predates and predicts any social impact, without the former, the latter cannot occur. The high media profile of the Northern Kites Project has supported and very considerably enhanced, the level of public awareness of the red kites. In July 2004, just after the first kites were released, in the *Journal* newspaper's – '100 reasons Why it's Great Up North', listed at No.40 was, 'Seeing red kites soar over suburban Gateshead'. Clearly, the kites had an immediate impact on the public consciousness of the people of the North East.

The media profile of the Project has helped to contribute to changes within people and communities, where articles have inspired people to go out, see and learn about the kites. Consequently, this has developed support for the Project and for the community to do things for itself in relation to the kites, ultimately empowering and engaging people. People's involvement in red kite activities in response to seeing the birds on the television, or reading about them in the press, has contributed, in many instances, towards the informal education of both children and adults. As part of this process, people meet other people and the resultant social interactions can help reduce isolation and contribute to greater social cohesion.



Figure 27. Northern Kites Project Manager being interviewed by the BBC

Northern Kites, as a community-focused project, has been able to build community support partly because of its media profile. Part of the initial 'conversation' between Project and community, in effect, the opening gambit of the social exchange about the Project's work, was undertaken through the media.

This meant that people were more quickly connected to, and supportive of, the work of the Project. Such a

high profile in the media has made massive contributions to both the local image and the regional identity. Many more people now know that where the kites fly is a very special place. It is abundantly clear, that through the media work and press profile of Northern Kites, people have not only been made aware of the kites but also of their local environment and green space on their doorstep, making people feel better about where they live. This has contributed to the improvement of local people's quality of life and enhanced their perception of quality of place, through the process of creating a high public awareness of red kites in the core Project area and, in relative terms, across the North East region.



Case Study 4 – ‘Red Kites by the People, for the People’ Northern Kite Volunteers, People & Community Engagement Case Study

“Being a Northern Kites volunteer changed my life. I had just retired from a long career, and suddenly I became part of the Northern Kites team. It was a privilege to be involved in the red kite release programme.... I made lots of friends and I joined a lifelong learning class to improve my own knowledge of birds. The Project was a unique experience and achieved a lot more than just successfully releasing red kites into the Derwent valley.”

Sylvia Jones, Northern Kites Volunteer

Background & Introduction

Volunteers were involved in every aspect of the Northern Kites Project since it began in April 2004 and have been, in effect, the ‘people engine’ of the Project’s work. They were drawn from a wide geographic area, from as far a field as central Northumberland and southwest County Durham, though the core nucleus of people involved was based on Tyneside.

Volunteers were registered through the RSPB’s volunteering programme with insurance and health and safety matters being provided by, and complying with, that scheme. On a day-to-day basis, they were managed through the Northern Kites’ Project Administrator, but worked with all members of staff. The Project organised two formal volunteers’ meetings a year (spring and autumn), there were monthly informal volunteers’ meetings, and email updates were sent out to members of the volunteers’ email group on an approximately monthly basis.



Figure 28. Volunteers’ meeting

This case study sets out information about the work of the Northern Kites’ volunteers and demonstrates how they came to exemplify the local community support for the Project. It details the range of volunteer inputs, their achievements and highlights the social impacts of



volunteering with Northern Kites and the benefits derived for the local community, the wider area and the volunteers themselves through their work.

“Volunteers were incredibly professional, giving us so much information while waiting to see the birds, that I came away as equally impressed by them as I was the kites. Their infectious but unobtrusive enthusiasm rubbed off on us and maintained our interest in the programme.”

C. B., Cramlington, Visitor to Kitewatch 2006

Objectives

The objectives of this case study are to:

- Document the time inputs, in-kind value and expertise that volunteers brought to the delivery of the Project
- To summarise the reasons why people volunteered with the Project and the activities they undertook
- To identify the social impacts of volunteering to the volunteers themselves and the people they engaged with.

Methodology

Data for this case study was collated from the various databases used to manage and record the volunteers' details and inputs to the Project. These include a recording log (which documents the names of active volunteers, the hours worked and tasks undertaken), volunteers' timesheets and an electronic summary database of 'hours worked'. This data was recorded in a systematic way from the commencement of the Project, for submission to Partner and funding organisations. Information regarding volunteers' activity was further supplemented by collating narrative information, compiled by various members of the Northern Kites Team. Furthermore, in late 2006, 30 active volunteers completed a survey that included questions on their demographic status, reasons for volunteering and the activities they undertake. This case study also draws from that sample.

Results

In the five years of the Project, more than 140 people made voluntary contributions to the work of the Project and over 100 individuals joined as volunteers, for varying amounts of time. Volunteers were involved in many different kinds of activity, which were designed to excite people about kites and engage the public with the work of the Project. They assisted with every aspect of the Project's work since its inception and, in effect, provided the capacity of



almost two additional members of staff over the Project's lifetime. Collectively, they contributed over 15,000 hours of work, which has been estimated in pure staffing support terms, as being worth over £40,000 per annum.

Volunteers are active most days of the week and there were, quite often, anything from three to five working for the Project on any one day. Volunteers were active most days of the week, participating in a variety of tasks.

Volunteers Have Delivered

Volunteers assisted with:

- Practical work e.g. building the red kite's aviaries (more than 20 different volunteers helped to construct the red kites aviaries in April/May 2004)
- Collecting baby kites from the Chilterns (four volunteers helped with the 500 mile round trips, to transport kites from southern England to the North East of England 2004-2006)
- Assisting with the management of the young red kites when birds were in captivity before their release into the wild e.g. feeding and welfare activities
- Assisting with red kite releases 2004-2006. More than 25 volunteers assisted at over 15 red kite release events in the summers of 2004, 2005 and 2006
- Scientific monitoring of red kite populations. Volunteers undertook more than 70% of all of the monitoring of the establishing population of red kites in the North East, collecting information from the public and following up sightings and reports of red kites and using the specialised radio telemetry equipment to 'radio-track' the birds
- Public advocacy work. At over 200 events, volunteers helped engage over 50,000 people e.g. Kitewatch 2006-2008, for which volunteers provided over 60% of the staffing input and engaged with over 24,000 people
- Delivering education sessions to school groups both within school and in the field helping them to see and understand red kites

Figure 29. Volunteer, Ian Fisher, helping with kite handling



- Project administration. For example: data inputting, photocopying, collating Project Information Packs - volunteers have collated over 90% of the more than 5,000 Project Information Packs distributed by the Project (an average of almost three for every day that the Project was running)
- Volunteers handled and processed over 40,000 promotional leaflets prior to distribution – delivering many of these door-to-door in parts of the Project area
- Supported the development and implementation of the Project's community engagement initiative in five areas across the North East of England (see Case Study 7)
- Trained as Health Walk leaders to aid in the delivery of weekly red kite themed Health Walks.

Evidence Gathered through Monitoring Systems

"It has been such a privilege being part of a team of volunteers helping return these wonderful birds to the area they should never ever have left".

Tim Watson, Northern Kites Volunteer

To April 2009, at least 141 individuals had been involved as 'volunteers' since the start of the Project's work. The total number of registered volunteers amounted to more than 100 and, at February 2009, 68 volunteers were still registered, 47 of these being judged 'active'. The Northern Kites volunteers exceeded the Project's HLF-derived five-year target for voluntary contributions in less than three years.

2006 Volunteers' Survey Data

Volunteer's comments on the elements of working with the Project that has impacted on them personally, from the 2006 survey:

- *"The work is interesting and I enjoy the social contact."*
- *"Being given the opportunity to make a positive contribution to the success of the Project."*
- *"Watching kites fly and sharing this with other people."*

The 2006 survey was sent to 62 volunteers, there were 30 respondents. The survey determined that of this sample, the majority of Northern Kites volunteers were male, of white ethnicity, over 40 years old and a mixture of retired (40%) and employed individuals (40% were in full or part-time employment). Over 80% lived on Tyneside, however, some travelled greater distances, e.g. from Otterburn in Northumberland and Barnard Castle in County Durham, to participate in Project activities. People mainly volunteered, as they were



interested in wildlife, birds and red kites specifically. However, some got involved to improve their health and wellbeing and to meet new people. Volunteers were active on most days of the week and got involved in a range of activities, including monitoring the kites, which was felt to be the most enjoyable activity, closely followed as a preference by assisting at public events.

Additional volunteer demographic information from the 2006 survey:

- Over 80% lived more than 6km from the Project's core area
- Over 20% volunteered to improve their health and wellbeing
- Over 20% volunteered to meet new people
- 45% actively volunteered more than once per week

Analysis and Discussion

A People's Project

"Seeing these beautiful birds certainly lifts my spirits and puts a smile on my face ... Being a Northern Kites volunteer has certainly changed my life for the better".

Marian Williams, Northern Kites Volunteer

The contribution of Northern Kites volunteers has effectively turned the Project into the 'people's kites'. It has been local people, as volunteers, that have connected the red kites to others (sometimes friends or neighbours), resulting in local community buy-in, support and genuine ownership of the kites and the Project. Volunteers have empowered others to learn about red kites, be inspired to take action and become involved themselves. This connection between people has strengthened community bonds and provided networking opportunities based around red kites. This has had added untold value to the Project's work in the region. Most importantly, for a project marketed as being about 'red kites and people', is the fact that the volunteers were often the ones delivering the Project's work and messages. This demonstrates that the Project really is for people, delivered by people – 'the community doing it for itself'. The work of the Northern Kites volunteers is a good example of this maxim, and notably the enjoyment and personal reward gained from volunteering for the Project was specifically highlighted by an evaluation report of HLF funded projects, as a demonstration of the value gained from voluntary work (Applejuice, 2006).

Personal Development of Volunteers

Some of the Project's volunteers have become real experts on red kites and their ecology. This is a powerful demonstration of how the Project has not only seized the public imagination, but empowered people that helped deliver the Project, to 'grow'. Volunteers



have experienced personal developments through their inclusion in several Project training opportunities, such as bird handling, monitoring, Health Walk leader courses and first aid, while others have been encouraged to take up externally organised adult education courses. Volunteers have also indicated that it is the social aspect of volunteering, i.e. the opportunity to make new friends, which has rewarded them for work with the Project.

Award Winning Involvement

“For me, red kites symbolise a second chance, both by learning from the past, but most of all, hope for the future”.

Judi Postle, Northern Kites Volunteer

The achievements of the Northern Kites volunteers have been highlighted by success in environmental and community volunteer award schemes. In July 2008, the volunteers won the regional Heritage Heroes Award in the Nationwide Building Society's Heritage and



Figure 302. Northern Kites Volunteers receiving their Heritage Heroes Award

Community Awards. Project volunteers went on to represent the North East at the scheme's national finals in London where they were the only wildlife project represented. Volunteers were also short listed in February 2009, in both the community group and individual volunteer categories of the *Evening Chronicle's* 2008 Environmental Awards.

“The project has recognised the skills that I have and has given me lots of scope to use them towards the benefit of the red kites. The camaraderie and teamwork amongst staff and volunteers alike throughout the project has made the work all the more enjoyable.”

Ken Sanderson, Northern Kites Volunteer

The Future & FoRK

In early 2009, a new community-driven organisation, Friends of Red Kites (in the North East), 'FoRK', was constituted. This organisation is largely made up of Northern Kites volunteers who have established a membership organisation that will continue some of the red kite monitoring and community advocacy work, beyond the funded-phase of the Northern Kites



Project. At the establishment of this organisation, existing Northern Kites volunteers filled all committee roles and the officers' positions, Chair, Treasurer and Secretary, were undertaken by three of the Project's most active volunteers.

Conclusions

A key element of Northern Kite's 'people work' has been delivered through its volunteers. The application and dedication of the volunteers in supporting the return of red kites to the North East has been exemplary. Put simply, the return of the red kite, as a breeding bird to the region would not have been accomplished as quickly or effectively without them. The efforts of volunteers have also significantly contributed to changes within local communities where they have inspired others to learn about the kites and support the Project, ultimately empowering the communities they engaged.

Volunteers themselves have experienced considerable personal growth over the lifetime of the Project. Many of them have increased their own knowledge of kites and the environment,



Figure 31. Volunteers growing social bonds through working together

and developed the self-confidence to share with others their passion and enthusiasm for the birds.

They have developed friendships with fellow volunteers and people visiting events, strengthening social bonds and contributing to social cohesion, both within the group itself, and out in the communities they have served.

Volunteers allowed the Project to deliver a greater social impact than would otherwise have been

possible, without them. They not only expanded its capacity to deliver, but also improved the nature and quality of that delivery. Involving people from the local community means that it is easier to secure real support and wider understanding from within that community, and it is in this sphere that the true worth of the volunteers' input to the Project lay.

"Talking to people from all walks of life and hopefully enthusing them with the love of kites, wildlife and the countryside has also boosted my self-confidence as well and has had such a positive impact on my life".

Marian Williams, Northern Kites Volunteer



In so many ways, Northern Kites volunteers were able to contribute their individual skills and knowledge to make the Project's work that much better for both red kites and people. It matters little whether these skills lay in technical areas or in the realm of public engagement.

"Actually, all of my experiences in the UK are because of red kites. Since 2005 when I first came to volunteer and live at Gibside I kept on searching for red kites in the sky, then in summer 2006 I was lucky enough to attend a red kite release. Through Northern Kites I had the fantastic good luck to meet wonderful people who became my friends and who told me about kites and many other things....I met such great people at Northern Kites, both staff and volunteers – some have become real friends and I can't stop visiting them, they also keep managing to come to Lithuania! Honestly, you can see what an amazing impact red kites have on peoples lives!"

Giedre Tomkeviciute, by email, July 2009

What each and every one of the volunteers brought with them was passion and enthusiasm, which was communicable to others and the value of that to a project, such as Northern Kites, and the communities to which it delivered, was priceless



Case Study 5 – ‘The Business of People’

Engaging People through Red Kites and Business Case Study

Background & Introduction

It is now acknowledged that nature conservation can provide significant benefits to local economies (Milton, 2009). The return of red kites to the North East of England by Northern Kites has provided support to local economies in a variety of ways. Business opportunities have developed around the return of the red kites to the region. These range from the use of the kites’ image for marketing to the adoption of the red kite in an award-winning, major branding exercise.

This case study attempts to show how red kites and the Project have worked with and for business in the North East, for the economic benefit of the people within and around these businesses, their customers and their suppliers, but also to sample what local businesses and people feel about Northern Kites.

Objectives

The objectives of this case study were to:

- Highlight some of the business/Project interfaces that have been developed by Northern Kites, which have delivered significant social impacts
- Summarise how these interfaces have benefited the businesses and the people that the businesses serve, and to highlight the social impacts of these benefits
- Summarise businesses, and the public’s thoughts about the economic value of the Northern Kites

Methodology

Data for this case study was collated from the narrative information collated by the Northern Kites Project about its business relationships over the period 2004-2008. Furthermore, during 2008, a consultant undertook a full economic evaluation of the Northern Kites Project, and this case study drew from the report on that work (Milton, 2009). As part of this exercise, two surveys of business attitudes were conducted and these also inform this case study. It also draws, from the results of the canvassing of public opinion on the perceived economic worth of Northern Kites, undertaken by Lamb as part of her Social Impacts Study in 2008 (Lamb unpub. 2009).



Results

Since the re-establishment of breeding red kites in the region, from 2006 onwards, the Project worked to establish a range of relationships with a number of businesses of varying styles and sizes, whilst the kites themselves inspired many small businesses, often those in the creative sector.

People's View of Red Kites and Business

It is key to understanding businesses' attitudes to red kites, that businesses engaged by



Figure 32. Northern Kite Beer

Northern Kites were not 'selling' to an unresponsive public, as they attempted to create commercial opportunities relating to the red kites. By 2006/7, the media and community profile of the Project and kites had effectively 'warmed-up' potential markets.

Indeed, as the survey conducted by Lamb (unpub. 2009) demonstrates, there was a strong public perception that the presence of kites had acted as a tool to stimulate economic regeneration. Asked whether they thought that the red kites had contributed to the regeneration of the lower Derwent valley, 88% of respondents believed they had. In the wider economy, the public perception of the kites as contributors to Gateshead's regeneration, and that of the 'region', was somewhat less, but still very

positive, at 72% and 69%, respectively. These are remarkably high levels of belief in the ability of the red

kites to support regeneration and the economy.

Given these high levels of expectation, it is not surprising that the follow-up question, asking whether the Northern Kites Project had started to contribute to the economy of the lower Derwent valley was also met with a high positive level of responses. Seventy percent of people responding, believed that the kites were economically aiding the area, though replies regarding contributions to Gateshead's and the wider regional economy of the North East, elicited lower, but still significant responses, at 55% and 49%, respectively.



The Business View of Red Kites

Two surveys of businesses, located primarily in the lower Derwent valley, were carried out in 2008 (Milton, 2009). Thirty businesses responded to questions that sought their opinion of the red kites from a business perspective and whether they believed the presence of the kites conferred commercial benefits. Milton (2009) discussed the full results of this survey. In summary, it is worth noting that 20 businesses recognised the ability of the red kites to contribute to the local economy and, from a business perspective, 23 of the 30 businesses that responded rated the return of the red kites as either 'very useful' or 'useful'. Seventeen respondents (57%), especially those operating in the food and drink sector, thought the Project had the capacity to offer commercial opportunities. As verification of this, eighteen respondents (60%) believed that the red kites had provided them some form of economic benefit. One business was able to provide an estimate of this increased revenue, suggesting that it had undergone a 20% increase in turnover and profitability because of the presence of the red kites. This boost in profitability helped sustain the business through difficulties. Therefore, the red kites can offer real economic benefit, which in turn supports employment, and thus provided social impacts.

Business Examples

Red Kite Construction, founded in 2006, is a Newcastle based business. The owner, Steve Hair, named his business after the birds, which also feature as his company's logo. The company has completed a number of kite-themed property development and commercial construction schemes. One, the aptly named 'Red Kite House' is located in Dipton, in the Derwent valley. The company's branding work was undertaken by Derwent valley based company Signs, Signs, Signs, who have supported a number of kite initiatives.

Go North East is one of the principal public transport providers in the North East region. It has a turnover of over £70million per annum and employs more than 2,100 people. During 2006, as the company was developing its area-branding concept, Northern Kites proposed a



Figure 33. Minister for the Natural and Marine Environment, Wildlife and Rural Affairs, Huw Irranca-Davies MP. on Red Kite bus, October 2008



red kite-branded bus for the company's Derwent valley routes. The resultant Red Kite service comprises a fleet of nine buses, which travel through the heart of Gateshead's 'kite country', between Newcastle City Centre and Consett, via MetroCentre, every eight minutes in either direction at peak times. An estimated 3,500 passengers travel on the Red Kite buses daily. A series of interpretation panels on the buses tell the story of the return of the red kite. The launch of the Red Kite service has been hugely successful in all aspects, particularly in terms of attracting people to see red kites. For the company, it led to increased passenger numbers on the relevant routes, by over 10%, which equates to around 1,000 extra passengers per week. In monetary terms, Go North East estimates that the Red Kite buses have increased their annual turnover by £50,000 and, between the launch of the service in March 2007, and to December 2008, contributed upwards of £90,000 additional net revenue to the company. In November 2008, from almost 200 entries across the country, Go North East's Red Kite bus won the advertising consultants', CBS Outdoors Marketing Award, at the UK Bus Awards 2008. The images on, and within the buses, means that 'red kites' are seen by hundreds of thousands of people in the region each year, further emphasising the red kites 'brand identity'

Wylam Brewery, in November 2007 launched the North East of England's first red kite beer, *Northern Kite*. This is a good example of the economic activity that the kites has helped stimulate, bringing the birds, the Project and the work of the Partners to an ever-wider audience. The 'ruby ale' is sold in cask and bottle forms from local pubs and retail outlets mainly in northern England, but it has also been made available in high profile and prestigious outlets in London (including the Houses of Parliament). Within two months of its launch, *Northern Kite* had become the brewery's second best selling product and the beer is now a core offering in its range. The success of this venture led to the brewery being commissioned by Gateshead Council to produce *Angel Ale* in April 2008 to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the unveiling of the Angel of the North. Figures show that from launch to December 2008 sales of *Northern Kite* had generated over £43,000 for Wylam Brewery, (approximately 15% of its sales income). With a Project message on every bottle sold, as well as on the beer mats upon which pint glasses stand, this work brings red kite messages to many thousands of people in places where wildlife message are not usually deliverable.

Red Kites in the Red Mall: On June 19th 2007, MetroCentre in Gateshead, unveiled a large (3m by 3m) banner, featuring a red kite, situated close to



Figure 34. Red Kites in the Red Mall information panels, MetroCentre



the pedestrian entrance of its Red Mall. This eye-catching image is supported by information panels, located close to the Red Mall Customer Services Desk, which tells the tale of the return of red kites to the North East. The desk has literature about the work of Northern Kites and information on how people can see kites locally. It is estimated that there are 25 million visitors per annum to the MetroCentre, and tens of thousands of people each year that see these display materials. These spread the good news messages about the region's high quality of life and place, to audiences that are not normally in the position to receive such positive environmental messages within a retail setting.

Three companies of estate agents, based in Rowlands Gill, have used the presence of the red kites to support the sale of local properties. Other property companies have used the kites to promote their housing developments. For example, developers are using the kites in the marketing prospectus for a townhouse development at Axwell Park, as are the developers of the 'Red Kite Barns', a farm outbuildings redevelopment at Barlow. Such profiling indicates that the kites have such a social cachet that they are now viewed as a powerful support to existing marketing efforts or a novel marketing angle in themselves.

Local plumbing service, 'Plumb-It-In', based in Rowlands Gill, uses kite images on its vehicle to show that it is based in 'kite country', as do Stirling Taxis, who provide 'Cabs for Kite Country'. This not only promotes the red kites but also boosts the companies' images, associating them with a readily identifiable feature of the green environment and as an 'area recogniser'.



Figure 35. Plumb-it-in, a local business supporting the Kites

Analysis and Discussion

The Business Big Picture

In broad-brush terms, the red kites have contributed significantly to the economic development of the area. The economic benefits from the return of the red kites have been considerable in the local context with extra income of over £160,000 a year being derived for the local economy from visitor spend alone (O'Keefe, 2009). They have provided repeated opportunities for positive, and often national multi-media, complementary advertising for a



range of companies. The value of such activities for just one company, Go North East, was estimated to be £30-40,000 per annum (Milton, 2009).

Broad Support for Tourism Business



The kites have supported the development of specific tourism activities that encourage tourists to visit the North East (e.g. the Red Kite Trail), thereby encouraging spend in the local economy. More generally, kites have enhanced the regional tourism offer, to create new and popular visitor destinations with the resultant economic benefits.

Figure 36. Red Kite Trail way-marker

Personal Developments for Business People

Many of the people working within the businesses that have worked with Northern Kites have, in some way, re-evaluated how to undertake some of their operations. In no small part, this has been down to a realisation that wildlife, such as red kites, can be a powerful complement to a business' portfolio of work. For instance, bus drivers on Go North East's Red Kite bus service have taken the kites to their hearts. On duty, they all wear red kite pin badges on their lapels and more than 20 attended red kite awareness training. This adds an extra element to the service they provide, beyond their primary driving role, acting as 'red kite tour guides' to visitors and the local community.

The figures relating to economic benefits and regeneration gleaned by Lamb (unpub. 2009) demonstrate the public's strong belief in the ability of what is essentially a wildlife conservation project, to stimulate and support commercial opportunities. This suggests willingness on its behalf to purchase or use goods and services that relate to the red kites. This, in turn, has positive social impacts in supporting jobs and channelling monies into local economies.

"Locally the kites have captured people's imagination encouraging them to purchase pictures/prints to adorn their walls."

Alan Mould, Artist/Illustrator, Business Survey, 2008

New Business Opportunities

The offer of kite-branded 'services' or 'products' by several business operating within different spheres of economic activity illustrate the significant potential of utilising the kites to create business opportunities. This is certainly not an exhausted commercial proposition, as new



business opportunities, using aspects of the kites, are regularly being created by business-people. Muddy Fingers Pottery and Gallery, based in High Spen in the heart of the lower Derwent valley, began producing red kite ceramic work during 2008. 'Tasters' of this decorative ware were available for 'hands-on' decoration by children at community events in 2009, thus delivering both social and economic impacts. There are many other potential commercial areas open to exploitation by businesses, from red kite branded clothing, to further food and drink products.

Conclusions

In total, it is estimated that over its lifetime, the Northern Kites Project supported 12.5 Full Time Equivalent jobs in the local economy, and generated at least £1.72 million local economic activity (Milton, 2009). Such work will have had clear social benefits within the context of the local community as this money supported people's employment and helped deliver all of the other benefits derived by such economic activity. The proactive work of the Project with local businesses has also contributed to the process of empowering the community, and helped connect small businesses with each other. The success of some businesses in using kites, has made others want to learn more about the kites, support the Project, and reap benefits from them connecting to the kites. Ultimately, this has helped in some small way, to empower the local business community, to engage them and everybody involved in their work. In some instances, such as Go North East's bus drivers, people working in the businesses connected to Northern Kites have developed new skills and



Figure 37. Go-North East's bus drivers at 'kite awareness'

knowledge, leading to personal growth, allowing the development of greater self-confidence, and the ability to share newfound knowledge with others. Such iconic work as the red kites on buses and beer has clearly helped, as much through their feature as a local talking point, to cement social bonds and develop some elements of social cohesion.



Case Study 6 - 'Red Kites are Good for You!'

Red Kites and Health Benefits Case Study

Background & Introduction

Health and wellbeing are fundamentally linked to lifestyle and life practises. It is well documented that environmental factors are key to health outcomes. It is also well documented that the green environment can have very beneficial effects on people's health (Bird, 2007).



Figure 38. Health walkers in the Derwent valley

In autumn 2006, Northern Kites became aware that a number of people had commented that the red kites made them 'feel better'. In an attempt to understand people's improvements in health and wellbeing as a result of their association with red kites and the Project, a simple study was initiated. Building on the results of this work, the Project's staff and

volunteers worked with officers from Gateshead Council to develop a

programme of red kite themed Health Walks. These commenced in September 2008. The walks encouraged people with health problems to visit the countryside to see kites and, as a result, to secure health and fitness improvements.

This case study aims to summarise benefits derived by people engaging with the red kites from the perspective of health, and to highlight the resulting social impacts.

"I have made many new friends and feel very privileged to have been involved in this fast moving and inspirational project that has brought these magnificent birds back to the North East".

Judy Summerson (Volunteer Health Walk Leader)

Objectives

The objectives of this case study were to:



- Summarise the results of the volunteers health questionnaire and the engagement levels of the red kite themed Health Walks programme
- Identify any other health information pertinent to the kites and to show how these activities have impacted upon people.

Methodology

In late 2006, Northern Kites volunteers were asked to complete a questionnaire identifying any perceived changes to their health and wellbeing that had occurred whilst volunteering with the Project. The results were analysed by staff in the Department of Psychology at the Newcastle University (using the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank test) and are a central element of this case study.

During 2008, Northern Kites staff and volunteers attended Health Walk leader training so that the Project was able to organise a programme of red kite themed 'Health Walks'. These walks began in September 2008 and attendance figures are recorded by the Project, using a weekly register. Data and feedback from these Health Walks are used in this analysis. Additional information relevant to health and wellbeing, deriving from a local study of red kite social impacts (Lamb, unpub. 2009), is also incorporated here.

Results

Volunteers Health Questionnaire

In 2006, the Northern Kites' health questionnaire was sent to 62 volunteers, 30 of who responded. The analysed results indicated that red kites were good for people's health. The results identified that over 20% of respondents volunteered to improve their health and wellbeing, and for the opportunities, the work gave them to meet new people.

Questions assessing perceived health and wellbeing status before and after volunteering were analysed to determine any statistical significance. Despite the relatively small sample size, statistically significant improvements were recorded in volunteers' overall health and wellbeing, their frequency of activity, general mood, self-confidence and social activity. The reported improvements in self-motivation and mental health appeared positive, but were not proven statistically significant.

Red Kite Health Walks Information



In 2008, nine Project volunteers attended training sessions to acquire walk leader status and to gain first aid qualifications.

Thirty-three Health Walks were organised between September 2008 and April 2009. Sixty-three people registered for these walks, the average attendance was of six people, with a maximum attendance of fifteen.

Other Health Information

The study undertaken by Lamb (unpub. 2009) indicated that the return of the red kites had had a discernable, perceived affect on the health and wellbeing of individuals responding to the questionnaires. Whilst 63% of respondents to this survey reported that they had not undergone any change in health that might be viewed as attributable to the kites, no respondents reported a downturn in wellbeing. More significantly, 22% of respondents attributed an improvement in their physical state to the presence of the kites.

"To me red kites represent Freedom. They have given me the push I needed to make me get up, get out of the house and go on the Red Kite Health Walks into the countryside to look for them. They are such free and graceful animals to watch they make me feel free too. I have gained so much confidence from going on the Red Kite Health Walks that I am now training to be a Health Walk Leader".

June Smith (regular Health Walk attendee)

Analysis and Discussion

Health and Wellbeing Improvements

It is evident from the data collected by the Project that the kites have had a positive impact on how some people feel. They provide a great sense of enjoyment to people who have had the opportunity to see them in the wild and those who volunteer with the Project and this relates directly to wellbeing. It is clear that volunteering with the Northern Kites Project, and involvement with red kites, was felt to improve a person's overall health and wellbeing, general mood, and added to their self-confidence, social activity and weekly physical activity.

These improvements were perceived by volunteers to be related to seeing red kites in the wild and to the social aspects of volunteering, including sharing their experiences with the public at red kite events, and associating with like-minded people.

Many volunteers commented on the pleasure they derive from seeing the kites, for example:



- *“Seeing the kites and meeting like-minded people make me feel better.”*
- *“My overall health isn't good (spinal damage, heart and diabetic) but it's still wonderful to get out to monitor the kites regardless.”*

Encouraging people to go and see the kites derive health benefits has been successfully applied through the Health Walks programme. Regular attendees on the walks soon began to request extensions to the distance of the walk, as people felt that their health had improved sufficiently to address new challenges. Walkers also benefited greatly from the social aspect of the walks as they made friends with people of similar interests and physical abilities. Defining the success of the Health Walks programme were the two regular walkers who were so inspired by the red kites, and their fitness so much improved, that in July 2009 attended training with Gateshead Council to become Health Walk Leaders themselves.



Figure 39. Health Walkers better for seeing red kites

The full reasons for why kites should provide such a perceived, discernable, improvement in health for some individuals (Lamb unpub. 2009) are probably complex and were not detailed by the majority of the survey respondents. However, some measure of the ability of wild creatures to positively affect

wellbeing might be drawn from the comments provided by

one survey respondent. This individual had recently suffered the bereavement associated with the loss of two close family members, and seeing red kites, which at times flew over their garden (and which had also appeared over the funeral service during the internment), helped this person come to terms with their loss and provided them with some level of renewed optimism. Taking this case as an example of the wellbeing benefits provided by kites for this one individual is 'unrepresentative', but the fact that the birds can provide a vital and quite profound personal impact, which relates to health, is clear.

Learning and Development

Using the kites as a 'hook' to encourage increased physical activity has also provided educational opportunities for people. This has been evident through the training opportunities



provided for Health Walk Leader status as well as Health Walk participants, who have learned about kites while attending the walks.

Conclusions

In modern western society, increasingly resource rich and time poor, in which mental health issues and illnesses of the 'passive wealthy' are viewed as ever more negatively impacting, any factor that can be shown to offset such impacts should be viewed as socially valuable. Consequently, how red kites make people feel and how they make people behave in terms of activity levels are of importance. In this respect, how people perceive kites, as impacting upon their wellbeing, is crucial to the successful delivery of the Project's social objectives. The Project hoped to show that people felt that red kites were good for them.

The study of volunteers' health outcomes showed that some of the perceived improvements to health and wellbeing were proved statistically significant and were likely to be sustained through time. Although it has not been measured, it is also very probable that any health benefits gained would also have a 'knock-on' secondary effect to immediate family and friends, who would gain from the improved wellbeing of an individual in their social group who may be more active and, as a result, enjoy a better quality of life.

It is evident from the information collated by the Project that people can 'feel better' by connecting with red kites. When asked through the social impacts study, the results confirmed the more detailed feedback from volunteers. In response to this, 95% of survey respondents said the red kites made them feel, 'good or great' and when asked how the return of the red kites had affected their perceived 'quality of life', 70% of people said they felt the kites had materially improved it. The answer seems to be, if red kites are not good for you, not much in life is.



Case Study 7 - 'Kites in the Community'

Community Kite Cluster Case Study

Background & Introduction

During 2007, Northern Kites set up a number of red kite information networks, named 'Community Kite Clusters' (CKCs). These were created to deliver aspects of the Project's community outreach work. They attempted to raise red kite awareness and encourage access to the environment by connecting existing community facilities (such as local schools, visitor, education, business, health and environmental centres) to local open green space with red kite themed events, information and activities. They used existing community facilities as a Hub (Kite Information Hub or KIH) at which events and activities took place and to which, people were signposted from Kite Information Points (KIPs) around the area. In addition to getting messages out to the general community through this system, the Project targeted specific groups, some of which can prove to be more difficult to provide environmental messages for, such as farmers, the elderly and teenagers.



Figure 40. Leam Lane 'Red Kite Day'

As resources and time were limited, and because of the special opportunities presented by the reintroduction of red kites to an urban fringe location, the Project focused most of its outreach efforts on one of the Cluster areas, outside of the core Project area of the lower Derwent valley. This area, located in east Gateshead, had relatively low socio-economic status, an urban

setting, and offered local people limited access to the countryside. The *Index of Multiple Deprivation 2004* states that within the Wardley and Leam Lane ward, where the CKC was located, there are significant areas that fall within the top 10% most deprived parts of England and Wales (Census, 2001b). The Project tried to encourage people from this area to overcome their perceived barriers in accessing the countryside by using the opportunity to see red kites as an incentive to encourage participation, at any level.



This case study aims to show that the Community Kite Cluster initiative provided opportunities to encourage people, from sometimes socially challenged areas, to learn about red kites, to go and see them and to experience their own, local green environment, with all of the consequent social benefits to them.

Objectives

The objectives of this case study were to:

- Collate the people engagement figures from the five CKCs of the Community Kite Cluster initiative (2007-2008)
- Relate how these achievements have impacted socially on the people living in these Clusters, especially in the east Gateshead Cluster
- Highlight the comparative staff and resource inputs required to deliver this work in the different CKCs

Methodology

For all activities delivered by Northern Kites in the CKCs initiative, the following data was recorded:

- The number of people engaged with (an engagement was defined as a face-to-face encounter with a Project representative, during which 'the visitor' gained some knowledge about red kites and/or the Project)
- The number of families engaged with (a family was classed as a minimum of 2 adults and 1 child together)
- The average level of awareness of red kites and the Project among event participants (recorded as an estimated percentage by the Project representative).

Results

Kite Information Point and Kite Information Hub Establishment

Five Community Kite Clusters were established by the Project in different geographic locations across the region (see Table 3).

In the urban, east Gateshead Cluster, sixteen KIPs were established and networked to the Gateshead@LeamLane Centre. This facility was selected as the east Gateshead Kite Information Hub, as it is a facility managed by a Project Partner organisation (Gateshead



Council), which aspired to use the CKC process to increase the number of local people using the centre.

Type of Location	CKC Name	No. of KIH's	No. of KIP's	No. of Adopt-a-Kite Schools in Cluster
Urban fringe	Rowlands Gill, Gateshead	1	15	9
Urban	Leam Lane, East Gateshead	1	16	12
Rural, market town	Barnard Castle, S.W. Co. Durham	2	16	4
Rural	Powburn, N. Northumberland	2	16	3
Urban	Jesmond, Newcastle upon Tyne	1	16	4

Table 3: Northern Kites Community Kite Clusters summary information

Over the period March 2007 to February 2009, the Northern Kites' community outreach work, through the CKC programme, used a range of approaches, which included:

- Guided walks in the CKC areas, to look for kites (if present in that CKC) and other wildlife – an exercise in showing people the green space in their own area
- Red Kite Safaris - bus trips from the east Gateshead and Newcastle urban-based CKCs to the core Project kite area so people could see kites and other wildlife
- Family Craft Days, with children's craft activities to engage families with red kites in a fun, informal way. Sometimes these had specific themes, such as Christmas Crafts
- Community Presentations to specific groups within a community or a general talk in a public space such as a pub, community centre or village hall, which were open to all.
- Road-shows in outdoor public spaces designed to reach wider audiences



Figure 41. Culture Club bus safari

Staff Inputs to Community Outreach Work

Such community outreach work is labour intensive and requires concerted effort to deliver benefits for the local community and to gain support for the red kites. Staff inputs varied according to the type of method being used to engage people from the local community, but also according to the area in which activities were being delivered. For example, the average



information stall required a staff input of seven hours; a presentation, four hours; a family craft event, ten hours; a guided walk, eight hours; and a red kite safari, eight hours. An idea of the total staff inputs required to deliver the CKC programme of works is shown in Table 6.

Community Kite Cluster Engagement Figures

During 2007 through to late 2008, Northern Kites delivered 141 events in the CKCs and engaged with 26,857 people (see Table 4).

Community Kite Clusters	No. of Events (2007-2008)	No. of People Engaged	No. of Families Engaged
Rowlands Gill	35	18,348	591
Leam Lane	30	1,155	232
Barnard Castle	33	1,870	142
Powburn	17	2,623	272
Newcastle Upon Tyne	26	2,861	483
Total	141	26,857	1,720

Table 4: Community Kite Cluster - event delivery

Table 5 shows the engagement figures in the east Gateshead Cluster in 2007 and 2008.

Year	No. of events	No. of people attending	Average attendance at CKC events
2007	7	126	18
2008	23	1029	44

Table 5: Events delivered in east Gateshead 2007 – 2008

Adopt-a-Kite School Participation

In each CKC, there were several Adopt-a-Kite schools (see Table 3). However, levels of school involvement in the CKC process varied from school to school.

Not all of the Adopt-a-Kite schools in each CKC, elected to participate in initiatives organised by the Project (art competitions, kite safaris etc.) though they were still active as Adopt-a-Kite schools. On average, two to three Adopt-a-Kite schools in each Cluster area became a KIP. No formal evaluation was undertaken to assess why more Adopt-a-Kite schools did not get involved in the CKC initiatives, but informal feedback suggest that schools had limited time and resources available for non-Curriculum activities.

In the east Gateshead CKC, over 560 pupils from Adopt-a-Kite schools went to see red kites during Gateshead Council's Kitewatch events in 2007 and 2008. Students at Heworth Grange Comprehensive developed computer animation with a red kites theme. In the Teesdale Cluster, A-level Applied Science students from Teesdale Comprehensive School, Barnard Castle, studied red kites, looking at the reintroduction process and examining



persecution issues. The standard of entries by school pupils involved in art competitions was high, and winning entries were displayed in the local KIH.

Analysis and Discussion

Through the CKC work, the Northern Kites Project aimed to develop three levels of 'social connectivity':

1. Raise Awareness of Red Kites, the Northern Kites Project and the Environment

Through its Community Kite Cluster initiative, Northern Kites aimed to raise awareness of red kites in five selected areas around North East England and to encourage people in these areas to visit their local open green space. The desired outcome was to deliver a change in attitudes and to create a sustained interest in accessing the countryside, with all the benefits that this might confer upon people. This aspiration was in part achieved through the establishment of the network of KIPs and KIHs in each Cluster, the red kite interpretation contained within them, and the programme of red kite events delivered in each one.

A greater degree of support and encouragement has been required in the east Gateshead Cluster compared to the other four Cluster areas in order to encourage people to take part in a red kite event in their local area. Further support was required for them to take this further, and attend a trip to see red kites in the wild. This was evident from the relatively poor turn out at initial red kite events in the east Gateshead area (see Table 4). To address this the Project adopted a program of house-to-house leaflet drops in 2008. Three leaflet drops were undertaken in the CKC area (nine leaflet drop sessions in total) with an additional staff-time input of 18 hours. Through this, leaflets were distributed to 3,200 homes. This method was not required to promote events elsewhere.

The relative investment of staff time for each 'person engagement' secured in each of the five CKCs is detailed in Table 6. Clearly, the more socially challenging east Gateshead Cluster area required a much greater investment of time to get people in that area actively involved.

Community Kite Clusters	No. of Events (2007-2008)	No. of People Engaged	Input (staff hours)	People engagements achieved per staff hour
Rowlands Gill	35	18,348	1177	16
Leam Lane	30	1,155	288	4
Barnard Castle	33	1,870	170	11
Powburn	17	2,623	137	19
Newcastle Upon Tyne	26	2,861	211	14
Total	141	26,857	1965	14

Table 6: Staff inputs compared to people participation outputs in CKCs, 2007–2008



2. Engage People More Directly with the Project

In total, the Northern Kites Cluster initiative, has engaged almost 27,000 people in face-to-face contacts with Project representatives (Tables 6). In the east Gateshead Cluster, almost 1,200 people participated in red kite activities. These figures relate to event attendees and do not include those who have seen red kite interpretation at KIPs and KIHs across the region.

3. Motivate People to 'Do Something'

It has been demonstrated that people have been motivated to 'do something' as a result of their interaction with the CKC initiative. For example, in 2007 and 2008, the Project conducted five 'red kite' bus safaris that took 166 people from east Gateshead out into the countryside to see red kites. Further evidence has come from the numbers of people attending red kite activities in Cluster areas. The initiative has shown that the model of a network of KIPs and KIHs providing information about the Project, red kites and red kite themed activities, works to connect and motivate people.

Vital to the success of the Community Kite Cluster concept was the involvement and support of people in the Cluster at the 'grass-roots' level. Examples include:

- A local business in Teesdale that is now undertaking its own red kite events, using the kites as a 'hook' to bring visitors to their venue
- In north Northumberland, the support of staff in the KIH at Ingram Visitor Centre, near Powburn, ensured that all Northern Kites' events based at the Hub were fully booked
- After attending a red kite family, craft day in east Gateshead, Mrs. Bronia Lacey, a teacher at Roman Road Primary School (in Leam Lane) registered the school with the Northern Kites Adopt-a-Kite scheme. The school featured in the local press when the school adopted the scheme's 100th kite, calling their kite



Figure 42 Pupils of Roman Road Primary celebrate the naming of their red kite, Centurion

'Centurion'. The school has also become a KIP. Mrs

Lacey said, *"This is such a brilliant story. The whole school was involved in naming the kite and it turned out to be extraordinarily appropriate to name it 'Centurion'!"*



Using the kites, and the scheme, is going to be a great way for our children to learn about the environment.”

- Volunteers at Felling Community Centre, promoted events on Northern Kites' behalf, chatting with groups in the Community Centre about the red kite safaris, increasing numbers of people attending the safaris significantly.

Conclusions

No formal evaluation has been undertaken to assess if the Project is perceived as having contributed to a better quality of life in the CKC areas, except in the core Project area around Rowlands Gill (see Case Study 1). However, the Cluster initiative has contributed to the following social impacts:

Personal Development

- People's involvement in red kite themed activities held in CKC areas has encouraged social activity and contributed towards the educational development of children and adults.

Social Cohesion

- As a result of taking part in red kite activities this social interaction has reduced isolation and helped people make friends and cement relationships
- Northern Kites has linked existing community networks through the Community Kite Clusters initiative, increasing sociability
- Intergenerational contact has been developed through red kite activities, in particular, red kite safaris. Young and old have been able to take part in this wildlife experience together

Community Empowerment and Self-determination

- Successful establishment of CKCs has encouraged involvement of a variety of local organisations and businesses. They have been able to use the kites to raise their own profile, increase business income and increase membership
- Northern Kites, has built support through the Cluster initiative. This has been done through connecting a network of KIPs to a central KIH, the distribution of red kite interpretation materials, event promotion and community involvement in red kite themed activities

Health and Wellbeing

- Participation in guided walks has been encouraged in all five Cluster areas, whether the walk has been delivered in the CKC to highlight local green space or transport provided to take people to walk in the core Project area to see kites



Local Image and Identity

- The Cluster initiative people has not only made people aware of the kites but also of their local environment and green space on their doorstep, making people feel better about where they live.



Case Study 8 - 'Flying by Numbers'

People and Events Monitoring Case Study

Background & Introduction

At each event delivered or attended by Northern Kites between 2004 and 2009, data was collected to document the numbers of people engaged with, to inform further event activity and assess the level of delivery of the Project's objectives and targets. At each event attended by Northern Kites between 2006 and 2009, Project representative(s) also estimated the mean level of Project and red kite awareness amongst people engaged with.

To gather further evidence about the level of awareness of the Project and the numbers of people who have seen red kites, the Project undertook an exit survey at Chopwell Forest Festival (2007) and contributed questions to a visitor survey undertaken by Gateshead Council at Gateshead Flower Show (2007). In addition, Northern Kites created a visitor survey to be carried out by staff at the National Trust's Gibside Estate, from March 2008 - January 2009 (see Appendix 5).

This case study sets out the statistics derived from Northern Kites' people monitoring programmes. The aim of this case study was to create an evidence base, which demonstrated that Northern Kites had engaged with large numbers of people across the region using the kites.

Objectives

The main objective of this case study was to:

- Demonstrate, statistically, how effective Northern Kites had been at 'connecting people to kites' through its events programme and people monitoring systems.

More specifically to:

- Collate the data gathered at events attended/delivered by Northern Kites (2004-2009)
- Document the results of the exit surveys at Chopwell Forest Festival (2007) and Gateshead Flower Show (2007)
- Highlight some of the results from the red kite visitor survey carried out at Gibside Estate (2008)



Methodology

Evidence Gathering at Events

At all events delivered or attended by Northern Kites, the following data was recorded:

- The number of people engaged with (an engagement was defined as a face-to-face encounter with a Project representative, during which 'the visitor' gained some knowledge about red kites and/or the Project)
- The number of families engaged with (a family was classed as a minimum of two adults and one child together)
- The average level of awareness of red kites and the Project among event participants (recorded as an estimated percentage by the Project representative/s)

Visitor & Exit Surveys

Chopwell Forest Festival Exit Survey: July 2007

Chopwell Forest Festival is an annual two-day event, delivered by the Forestry Commission, attended by approximately 5,000 visitors per annum. Visitors access the event via controlled points and can therefore be easily surveyed. Northern Kites undertook an exit survey at the 2007 Festival. Visitors were asked to complete a short visitor survey as they exited the event. The survey questions were:

- 1) Have you heard of the Northern Kites Project?
- 2) Have you seen a red kite in the North East?

The Forestry Commission also undertook a self-completing visitor survey at this event, which included the same two questions. Survey forms were available at various points around the event for visitors to complete. Uptake of the Forestry Commission survey was low compared to the Northern Kites survey, as Northern Kites surveyed people face-to-face.

Gateshead Summer Flower Show Visitor Survey: July 2007

Gateshead Summer Flower Show is an annual three-day event, delivered by Gateshead Council and attended by approximately 25,000 visitors per annum. Council representatives distributed survey forms to visitors throughout the event. Visitors could deposit completed forms in collecting boxes or return them by post. Northern Kites added the same questions as used at the Chopwell Forest Festival, to this survey.

Gibside Estate Visitor Survey: March 2008-Jan 2009

The National Trust's Gibside Estate attracts over 100,000 visitors annually and was chosen as the location for an ongoing red kite visitor survey as there are, in contrast to other visitor sites in the core Project area, accurate visitor figures recorded at this site.



Northern Kites designed a visitor survey for use at this site (see Appendix 5) that contained three questions:

- 1) Before your visit today had you heard of the Northern Kites Project?
- 2) Before your visit today had you ever seen a red kite in the North East?
- 3) Did you see a red kite today while you were at Gibside?

Respondents were asked to answer the questions, enter their postcode and the date of their visit on the survey form and, on their exit, deposit their completed form in a post box in the main visitor car park.

From March 2008 to January 2009, 8,400 visitors (approximately 9% of all visitors) to Gibside were given a survey form on entry to the Estate. Using the survey results, percentages and Gibside's visitor figures for the year, it was possible to estimate the total number of people who had seen red kites at Gibside during the survey period.

A postcode analysis was undertaken to determine the geographical origins of survey respondents. Responses were allocated by postcode to three geographical areas describing concentric rings around Gibside. 'Ring One' was represented by respondents living within the lower Derwent valley. Respondents living just outside the valley represented 'Ring Two', and respondents living in any other postcode areas represented 'Ring Three'. This latter category included responses from Swindon, Inverness, Austria and Germany, amongst others.

Results

Evidence Gathered at Events

Event Data 2004- 2008	Type of Events			Total
	Information	Family Craft	Kite Viewing [^]	
<i>Total Number of Events</i>	115	57	88	260
<i>Total No. People Engaged</i>	25,739	6,279	26,564	58,582
<i>Total No. Families Engaged</i>	2,172	4,108	264	6,544

Table 7: People engagement figures at events (March 2004 up until end 2008) ([^] Includes attendees at red kite release events)

Distance from Project core area [^]	Average Estimated Level of Awareness (%)			
	2006	2007	2008	Average 2004-2008
<5 km	80%	78%	86%	81%
<10 km	32%	80%	85%	66%
<15 km	70%	55%	65%	63%
>20 km	40%	63%	63%	55%

Table 8: Estimated level of red kite awareness at events (2006-2008) ([^] The adopted central point for the core area is Rowlands Gill Gateshead)



Results of Visitor and Exit Surveys

Table 9: Summary of results from exit and visitor surveys by Project and Partners

Survey Location	Chopwell Festival (FC Survey)	Chopwell Festival (NK Survey)	Gibside Estate	Gateshead Flower Show	Average %
<i>Number of people attending event</i>	5,000	5,000	91,310	25,000	
<i>Number of surveys completed</i>	60	2072	531	1500	
<i>% Who had heard of Northern Kites</i>	76%	83%	72%	72%	76%
<i>% Who had seen a red kite in the North East</i>	49%	59%	52%	22%	46%
<i>Estimated number at event who had heard of Northern Kites</i>	3,800	4,150	65,743	18,000	
<i>Estimated number at event who had seen a red kite</i>	2,450	2,950	47,481	5,500	
<i>Total estimated number who had heard of Northern Kites</i>	91,693				
<i>Total estimated number who had seen a red kite in the North East</i>	58,381				

Table 10: Gibside Visitor Survey postcode analysis

Geographical Area	Number of Surveys	Percentage
<i>Ring 1</i>	36	7%
<i>Ring 2</i>	24	4%
<i>Ring 3</i>	329	62%
<i>Did not enter postcode</i>	142	27%
<i>Total number of surveys</i>	531	100%

Analysis and Discussion

Raising People's Awareness

In its first two years, the Project's emphasis was on releasing kites, therefore most event activity was associated with red kite releases and some community presentations. From 2006 onwards, a concentrated effort was made to increase awareness of red kites and the Project across the region through events. In 2007 and 2008, event activity was focussed in key geographical areas through the Project's community outreach work. Table 10 highlights



how awareness was maintained or, in all but one area, increased over three years of event delivery (2006-2008), indicating that the Project had been successful in raising awareness

In the core area, the average level of awareness at events (2006-2008) was 81% (Table 8), as estimated by Project representatives. The average level of awareness derived from visitor and exit surveys undertaken in the core area was 76% (Table 9), supporting the accuracy of estimations at events. Other mechanisms employed to measure Project awareness (that direct quantifying methods revealed much higher levels of public awareness, see Case Study 1) included the Northern Kites Visitor Survey, a detailed visitor survey conducted in the core Project area in 2008. Amongst the 282 respondents to this survey, there was a very high

“I took my son and daughter along to the Roost Watch event at Sherburn Towers, and we all thoroughly enjoyed it. There was a great atmosphere, with people chatting and sharing optics etc. The weather could have been kinder to start with, but it was still a good couple of hours. So once again, thanks to everyone and congratulations on the success of a terrific project.”

Posted on Bird Forum by ‘Malcolm’, 21/2/2007

awareness of red kites, amounting to 91% of all respondents knowing about the kites.

Engaging People Face-to-face

The Northern Kites events programme engaged over 58,000 people through face-to-face contacts with Project representatives (Table 7).

Motivating People to ‘Do Something’

Red kite pin-badges were available to the public at every event. The acquisition of a badge demonstrated that the event participant had taken action ‘for kites’ because of an engagement with the Project. The acquired badges, when worn, raised awareness of kites and the Project after the event. All donations collected for badges were passed to the RSPB. At the end of 2008, Northern Kites had collected a total of £1,455 in donations for red kite pin badges at events alone. In total over 7,000 red kite badges were distributed by the Project across the North East.

Since 2004, when the Project began, to the end of 2008, 26,564 people attended a kite-viewing event. These people had an awareness of the Project and the kites and were motivated to attend an event, in effect to go and see kites in the wild. Information and family craft events are not included in this total, as it cannot be said that all people attending these type of events were motivated entirely by their interaction with Northern Kites to do so.



Monitoring data collected from Project partners at events and from Northern Kites volunteers indicate that additional people were motivated to become a member of a Partner organisation, as a result of engaging with Northern Kites. Between 2004 and December 2008, the RSPB achieved at least 48 additional memberships and the National Trust, at least 32 memberships through these mechanisms. These figures are based on data collated by Northern Kites. There were probably many more additional memberships generated because of red kites and Project activity, of which the Project is unaware.

Conclusions & any further discussion points

Key facts

Northern Kites has:

- successfully raised awareness of red kites and the Project
- successfully engaged people, face-to-face
- successfully motivated people to take action. Examples include:
 - becoming a member of a Partner organisation
 - acquiring and wearing a red kite pin badge
 - attending a red kite-viewing event, or to go and see kites in the wild

Social Impacts

There can be no social impact, without awareness. The level of public awareness of the Northern Kites Project and the red kites was very high, throughout the lifetime of the Project. This high level of awareness amongst the public has resulted, in part, from the Project's programme of people engagement activities.

The people monitoring mechanisms used by the Project have provided a statistical basis that demonstrated that Northern Kites had a considerable social impact on people and local communities. The Project:

Contributed to the improvement of local people's quality of life and enhanced their perception of quality of place by:

- Creating a high public awareness of red kites in the core Project area and, in relative terms, across the North East region
- Making people feel proud enough of where they live to 'fly' a red kite on their lapel. Over 7,000 red kite pin badges were distributed, via Northern Kites, across the region, flying the kite for people and wildlife

Helped increase the aspirations of local people by:



- Inspiring other organisations and projects to use the kites in order to promote what they do and have set out to achieve. For example, the National Trust and the RSPB used kites to sell and promote the membership benefits of their respective organisations

Provided engagement and learning opportunities for volunteers and local people, a crucial element of delivering sustainable outcomes

- The Project was hugely successful in delivering a programme of people engagement events at which people have learned about red kites and wider biodiversity

From a social perspective the Project and the red kites:

- Inspired local people to:
 - attend a red kite event
 - wear a kite on their lapel
 - become a member of the National Trust or RSPB
- Provided access to the kites and Gateshead's green environment for people of all abilities and backgrounds through its events programme.



Figure 43. Wallington Hall, National Trust, children's event 2007



Section 6 – Analysis and Discussion

“...I believe that kites always say ‘thank you’ from blue sky.”

Utaka Godo (Japanese resident), by email, July 2009

An assessment of the social impacts delivered by the Northern Kites Project, demonstrates that a high profile environmental ‘community project’, within a semi-urban landscape, can be



Figure 44. Wildlife totem pole at Rowlands Gill Community Primary school, created by a local artist

hugely effective in engaging people, galvanising their beliefs and securing their support.

What the Northern Kites Project successfully achieved was to link the apparently disparate elements of wildlife conservation with an improved awareness of environmental sustainability, whilst bolstering the local economy. It did this in a way that engaged local people and ‘rewarded’ their engagement by making them feel proud of what they have and where they live.

The development of a ‘honey-pot concept’, based around the Project’s

Community Kite Clusters work, illustrates that through clearly focused delivery (in targeted areas

to target communities, and audiences), environmental awareness and appreciation can be raised even in areas where there are ‘social challenges’ (see Case Study 7).

Amongst professionals, there will always be a discussion around the relative merits of urban versus rural locations for such work, each location offering its own advantages. What the urban-fringe location of Northern Kites offered, in terms of access and enabling people without the wherewithal to access the countryside, to do so was clearly significant. The



opportunity for such access, by many more people, should be seen as something that can drive the core objectives of any such environmental programmes of work.

Carrying out red kite activities and events in the 'rural setting' of urban-fringe Gateshead, as a way of drawing people out of the urban heart of Tyneside, brought considerable benefits to many people's lives. Taken in isolation, the numbers alone are significant, for instance, an estimated 100,000 people saw red kites in 2008 alone (O'Keefe, 2009). On top of such statistics, the value of the commitment and support of the community as secured by Northern Kites is incalculable. It is clear that some of the Project's tourism development activities, such as the Red Kite Trail, could only have



Figure 45. Bus stop providing information on the reintroduction programme and Red kite Trail

been developed in the more rural 'out of town' setting, but the added significance of this is its proximity and availability to many urban dwellers. In particular, the way the Project went about developing relationships with stakeholders, such as Go North East, to encourage affordable, sustainable access to these tourism initiatives and the red kites more generally, through the Red Kite bus service, is a testament to its people-oriented approach. Very considerable ancillary benefits, relating to the delivery of red kite messages to the public accrued from this method. For instance, it has been calculated that if just 75 people per bus journey took note of the red kite images on each 14 mile linear bus journey from Newcastle through to Consett, this equates to almost 2.8 million 'people registrations' of the Red Kite bus, and therefore red kites, per annum. This is a massively powerful tool for raising people's awareness.

The social fabric of the North East, and society more generally, has changed dramatically in recent years. More broadly, the modern, information-based culture and our increasingly passive society, bring with it, a new set of challenges. These sometimes manifest themselves in the form of health issues consequent to a lack of exercise (Jain, 2004). Anything that contributes to a countermanding of this and which encourages participation and activity, will lead to wellbeing and health benefits. Clearly, the work of the Project, in creating mechanisms and methods to access more easily the kites and the countryside, is a positive force for good. There is no better example of this than the Northern Kites programme of red kite Health Walks, which run on a weekly, basis, and was effectively run by local volunteers. People doing it for themselves.



In a wider geographical context, the collaborative work of the Northern Kites Project working with groups based in the Home Counties monitoring the Chilterns' red kite population, the donor population to the Northern Kites Project, might be seen as helping to bridge the still, in part, extant North-South divide. The high media profile of the Northern Kites Project, offered up the red kites to many more people than would otherwise have been possible had this not been the case. Furthermore, it has helped people from both within, and out with, the region, to see red kites as part of a very positive image of the North East.

Three of the four themed work areas of the Northern Kites Project, people, partnership and the economy, had a human focus or aspect to them. The fourth, wildlife, was purely environmental, though as delivered by the Northern Kites Project, even this 'environmental' delivery component was enhanced, by the humanisation of the process.

The media aspects of the Project were very community-oriented, targeting local and regional news mechanisms, to ensure a greater resonance of the Project's messages with local

"Fantastic! Thanks to very enthusiastic Volunteers."

N. M., South Shields, Kitewatch 2007 Visitor Book

people. The Project's approach, in choosing community-based or orientated solutions, for its challenges engendered for its consistently high-approval ratings amongst the public. Northern Kites and the reintroduction of the red kites, helped support community networks amongst local people, promoting a sense of inclusion within and between communities in the lower Derwent valley. The adoption of a community publication, such as the *Rowlands Gill Directory*, as a way of communicating with local people is a good example of a simple, but effective approach that built and reinforced connections between the Project and the local community. This approach had a disproportionately large enabling effect, in terms of the positive reception of the Project messages contained within that publication. This was well illustrated by the utilisation of the same publication to generate community feedback through a publicised questionnaire, which has informed one of the Case Studies embedded within this report (Case Study 1).

The Red Kite Trail, and similar multi-faceted work, showed how the Project, which ostensibly commenced in order to bring red kites back to the region, but had an aspiration to deliver some ancillary societal benefits, not only supported the local community processes, it ended up encouraging significant economic benefits. In an area within which the tourism offer has the potential for considerable further development, the Trail is now perceived as something that has served to deliver improvements to, and enhancement of, people's quality of life.



Northern Kites has connected wildlife with more people than probably any previous similar work in the region. More importantly, from a social perspective, it demonstrated that red kites, and wildlife more generally, can be a potent and important aspect of people's lives, for more reasons than previously appreciated.



Section 7: Concluding Remarks

There is little doubt that Northern Kites was the North East region's highest profile wildlife project. As a consequence of this high profile, the Project and the red kites themselves, contributed massively to the creation and enhancement of a positive area and regional image. However, as well as this it has also delivered huge benefits for the people of the region.

From a social perspective, the Project and the red kites:

- Inspired local people
- Galvanised people's good thoughts and opinions of the Derwent valley and the region
- Helped promote the links that exist between biodiversity, culture and landscape by showcasing the natural heritage of the North East
- Got more people visiting the Derwent valley to explore the themes of industrial heritage, land management and the history of the area by using the kites as an iconic image for the area
- Enhanced the leisure offer for both visitors and residents
- Helped to engage a wide constituency of communities, both of interest and geography, in the work of the Project and by providing a focal point for communities in the Derwent valley
- Provided access to the kites and Gateshead's green environment for people of all abilities and backgrounds
- Delivered a programme of works by engaging local communities by offering opportunities to volunteer and real involvement at the heart of the Project's activities and providing learning and skills development opportunities to local people
- Helped enrich people's quality of life experience, by stimulating community cohesion and increasing cultural participation through the kites
- Contributed to improving local health outcomes, with regular red kites Health Walks and through more people visiting the countryside to see kites, with all of the health and wellbeing benefits as a consequence



Figure 46. Red kite mosaic created by local school children



- Contributed to the economic development of the area by working in an imaginative way that connected sectoral interests, public, private and third sector, in new and sometimes unique initiatives
- Provided improved education opportunities and supported the work of existing facilities in the area
- Provided opportunities for new partnership working approaches and developed innovative new delivery models

The results of this study inform a number of conclusions about the social impact of well-planned and properly funded environmental programmes of work, such as Northern Kites.

Perhaps the most important of these are that:

- The social impacts accruing from wildlife-themed projects may be very considerable, in terms of their quantification and their 'rolled-out' benefits. This is recognised by the fact that Northern Kites was highlighted as a good practice case study in the Association of North East Councils' *Green Manifesto: Wellbeing, Health and the Environment*, published in October 2008 (Association of North East Councils, 2008)
- Engagement and participation in environmental activities can deliver considerable personal benefits, helping individuals to further their self-development and broaden their education base, in both formal and informal ways
- The benefits in all directions are increased with the degree of engagement of people in the work, i.e. awareness-raising confers some benefit, but active participation confers a greater degree of benefit e.g. the work of the Northern Kites volunteers. This can work to create a virtuous cycle. Volunteers are empowered to deliver, they inspire people through their work, recruit more volunteers and these deliver even more
- The social impacts derived from work such as Northern Kites are complex, but they can be teased apart in order to be comprehended
- Social impacts can be assessed for and should be factored into, the planning of all significant programmes of work in the environment.

It is clear from this study that projects, which deliver major environmental benefits, e.g. Northern Kites, can have a considerable and serious contribution to make in addressing current social challenges. Such works should not be seen as an adjunct to policy developments and rollouts, but fundamental to them. Likewise, the environmental sector should take very seriously its responsibility to deliver genuine and quantifiable social goods and benefits, when delivering its environmental programmes, not as a side issue, but as part of their 'menu' of core deliverables.



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Appendices

Appendix 1 - The Lower Derwent Valley: Some Aspects of 'Gateshead's Derwent valley

Introduction

The beautiful Derwent valley in Gateshead and County Durham is ideal red kite country with a mixture of mature woodlands, wetlands and open countryside replete with high quality landscape, abundant wildlife and areas of important historical and heritage interest. For Local Authority administration purposes, the 'lower Derwent valley' (Blackhall Mill- Lintzford and downstream) is largely contained within the 'Chopwell and Rowlands Gill', 'Winlaton and High Spen' and Whickham North wards of Gateshead borough.

History

The lower Derwent valley has a varied and interesting past of which much evidence remains. Much of the valley has been dominated by the mining industry often in the form of drift mines. This industry was supported by the construction of the Derwent Valley Railway that took coal from collieries further up the valley down to the staithes on the River Tyne. The line opened in 1867 and carried up to half a million passengers until it closed in 1962. The railway crossed the River Derwent on several bridges, or viaducts, of which one of the most magnificent is the Nine Arches Viaduct. This is now a central feature of the Derwent Walk Country Park. One of the valley's other defining features is the forty metre tall 'Column of Liberty' in the Gibside Estate. Gibside was the ancestral home of the Bowes Lyons family built by George Bowes in 1750.

Social Status

The Chopwell and Rowlands Gill ward in 2001 had a population of 9,198 (Census, 2001a). The employment of the ward's residents was mixed (Census, 2001a) and it presumed that a large number of these residents recorded as being employed in 'other' industries are probably employed in the service sector. Furthermore, it is presumed that, given the limited number of businesses located within the ward that the majority of the working population are employed in nearby Gateshead or Newcastle.

Visitor Infrastructure

Visitor facilities in the lower Derwent valley include a range of car parks, picnic areas, tearooms, shops, observation hides, wildlife trails, information displays, visitor centres and environmental education providers, as well as suite of organised events and activities provided by a number of organisations. The major recreational features and facilities are:



- **Derwenthaugh Park & the Derwent Walk Country Park** - managed by Gateshead Council. Tel: 01207 545212
- **The Gibside Estate** - managed by the National Trust. Tel: 01207 541820
- **Derwent Park and Caravan Park** - parking, shop, toilets, food. Tel: 01207 543383
- **Chopwell Woodland Park** – managed by the Forestry Commission. Tel: 01207 542231
- **The Derwent Walk** – managed by Durham County Council, upstream of Rowlands Gill. Tel: 0191 383 3594
- **Lintzford Garden Centre** –parking, food, shop, red kite information. Tel: 01207 549777.



Appendix 2 – Red Kites – Background, Status & the Reintroduction Programme

Red kites are big, beautiful birds of prey with a distinctively forked tail, russet plumage and a wingspan that measures more than five and a half feet. The species has a strong cultural resonance and various surveys have shown it, along with golden eagle and song thrush, to be among Britain's favourite birds. They are principally scavenging feeders, their main food being carrion and invertebrates, such as worms and beetles. Despite their size, they are lightweight creatures that have evolved to make a living with minimal effort, riding the air currents with grace and ease. Kites were once common across Great Britain, probably being our most widespread large bird of prey. Three hundred years ago, the species would have been a common sight over much of lowland England, including the North East. Red kites have been a rare species in the North East for almost two centuries.

In medieval times, the species fed in the streets of London (where it was given special protection for its role in 'cleansing the streets'). Between the 16th and 19th centuries, red kites suffered severe human persecution, with a consequent catastrophic reduction in their numbers. By the end of the 19th century, just a handful of British birds remained, all of them in Wales (Carter, 2001).

In the United Kingdom, there was a population of fewer than 20 pairs of red kites for most of the Twentieth Century. At its lowest ebb, during the 1930s, there was probably only a single successful breeding female in the remnant Welsh population. There was some recovery from around 1950, although this was slow. By 1989, 52 pairs were recorded nesting. The recovery speeded up over the subsequent decades, the 1980s in particular, and by 1991, it was estimated that 77 pairs were breeding (Carter, 2001).

In 1989, to address the situation, the Joint Nature Conservation Committee decided to reintroduce kites to various parts of the UK. Between 1989 and 2008 a variety of partner organisations have been working on a programme to return the red kite to its original range in both Britain and Ireland. Up to 2002, there had been six successful re-introduction schemes, three each in England and Scotland (Carter, 2001). By this time, North East England had been identified as probably the last mainland location for such a reintroduction, 'joining the dots' between the projects to the south and north. Therefore Northern Kites was formed.



Appendices 3a & 3b

Appendix 3a – Northern Kites Social Impacts Survey – Short Questionnaire

To try and better understand how the return of red kites has affected people in the northeast, a study is being conducted. Please take a few minutes to answer the following questions, then place your completed survey form in an envelope, and send it to the FREEPOST address below or hand it to the relevant person at this event/venue.

Freepost RRXU-CASY-TSCZ, Northern Kites, Office 3b, 33 St. Mary's Green, Whickham, Tyne & Wear, NE16 4DN

Please circle or tick the relevant answers that best represent your views about red kites and the Northern Kites Project.

1. Before completing this form, had you heard of the Northern Kites Project? YES NO

2. Have you seen a red kite in the northeast of England since their return in 2004?
 YES NO

3. Do you think that bringing red kites back to northeast England was?

A great idea A good idea Okay A poor idea A bad idea

4. How does seeing a red kite make you 'feel'?

Bad Less Good Indifferent Great Fantastic

5. How do you believe that the return of the red kites has affected your 'quality of life'?

Very positively Positively No change Negatively Very negatively

6. Do you believe that the return of the kites has helped local people become more interactive with one another (e.g. as a point of conversation)?

Strongly disagree Disagree Neither Agree or Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

To aid analysis of the results of this survey please write your postcode in the space below

Post Code

More details:

Would you be willing to share your views about red kites and the Project with a University Research Student during the course of a short interview? If you are willing for the researcher to contact you, please leave a telephone contact number or an email address below. Alternatively, email your details to info@northernkites.org.uk

Tel No..... Email Address.....

Thank you.



Appendix 3b – Long Questionnaire

Northern Kites Social Impact & Attitudes Study

Consultation Questionnaire (Detailed)

To try and better understand how the return of red kites to the region has affected people in the northeast, a social impacts study is being conducted. Please take a few minutes to answer the following questions. The results of this questionnaire are confidential and will be used only for this and related studies by Northern Kites and its partners.

Part 1 - About Red Kites and the Northern Kites Project

Do you think that bringing red kites back to northeast England was (please tick one answer)?

- A great idea
- A good idea
- Okay
- A poor idea
- A bad idea

As the Project progressed its work, which aspects of the Northern Kites Project were you aware of? (Please tick the relevant answers)

- The releasing of birds
- Wing-tagging and fitting radio transmitters
- Encouraging involvement from schools
- The 'poisoned kite' in 2004
- Events in communities
- The first breeding attempts
- Volunteering
- Other

The Northern Kites Project has achieved many things; can you rate those that are the most important to you ('1' being the most important)?

- It has brought red kites back to the northeast
- It has involved people in many aspects of the Project
- Helped to change people's view of the northeast
- Helped to confirm that the Derwent valley is a great place to live.
- Engaging local children in its work
- It has made local people more passionate about wildlife in general
- Been good value for money
- Given a high profile to Gateshead's green environment
- Provided a talking point for local people.
- Educating children about red kites and the environment.
- Other

Is there anything else you would like to add?

Part 2 - Red Kites and You

Which of these things (e.g. products), connected to red kites and the Northern Kites Project are you familiar with/aware of? Please circle Yes or No.

- Red Kite buses. Yes / No
- Northern Kite (the beer)
- Red Kite Cobbler (the bread)
- Kitewatch event
- Let's Go Flying Kites (children's picture storybook)
- Red kite events (guided walks etc.)



- Red kite artwork. Yes / No
- The Red Kite Trail. Yes / No
- Northern Kites website. Yes / No
- The Adopt-a-Kite scheme for schools. Yes / No
- Red kite safaris/tours. Yes / No
- Other

In the last 12 months, because of an awareness of the red kites have you done any of the following things?

- Told another person about the red kites or the Project. Yes / No
- Reviewed your own activities and how they affect the environment Yes / No
- Gone 'out of your way' to see red kites Yes / No
- Visited a green space/wildlife site, which you would not have previously Yes / No
- Joined a wildlife or environmental organisation. Yes / No
- Campaigned for kites or other wildlife. Yes / No
- Spent time watching red kites Yes / No
- Had a conversation with someone about kites or other wildlife Yes / No
- Other

How have you heard about the work of Northern Kites (please tick as many boxes as are relevant)?

- From Northern Kites Volunteers
- Through Northern Kites partner organisations e.g. Gateshead's Council News
- You are a member of a wildlife group
- Visited an event with red kite information
- Visited a red kite event e.g. Kitewatch
- Attended a talk by Northern Kites
- Leaflets/flyers
- By word of mouth
- Through the press - newspaper magazine other
- Rowlands Gill Directory
- TV coverage – news documentary national local
- Radio
- Information at local facilities – library visitor centre other
- From another wildlife organisation
- Other (please state)

Approximately, how often do you see a red kite (please tick one answer)?

- Never have
- Once a week (or more often)
- Less than once a week but at least once a month
- Less than once a month

Overall, how 'satisfied or dissatisfied' are you with the Northern Kites Project (please circle)?

Very satisfied Satisfied Neither Dissatisfied Very dissatisfied

Overall, how 'satisfied or dissatisfied' are you with the return of the red kite to the place that you live?

Very satisfied Satisfied Neither Dissatisfied Very dissatisfied

To what extent do you agree or disagree that you have been kept up to date with the Project's developments since the kites' return?

Definitely agree Tend to agree Tend to disagree Definitely disagree



In your own words, can you write down your understanding of why it was necessary to re-introduce red kites to the northeast through the work of the Northern Kites Project?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Part 3 – Social and Economic Issues

Is it your opinion that the work of the Northern Kites Project has contributed to the 'regeneration' of (please circle Yes or No):

- Your local area..... Yes/No
- the lower Derwent valley Yes/No
- Gateshead Yes/No
- the region (i.e. the northeast) Yes/No

Is it your opinion that the work of the Northern Kites Project has now started to contribute to the economy in (please circle Yes or No):

- Your local area..... Yes/No
- the lower Derwent valley Yes/No
- Gateshead Yes/No
- the region (northeast) Yes/No

How strongly do you feel that the red kites are 'your' local area's red kites (please circle)?

- Very strongly Fairly strongly Not very strongly Not at all strongly

How strongly do you feel that the red kites have helped to 'add value' to 'your' local area?

- Very strongly Fairly strongly Not very strongly Not at all strongly

To what extent do you agree or disagree that the red kites, have helped to make your local area (within a 15-20 minutes walking distance), one in which people are more proud of their area?

- Agree Tend to agree Neither agree nor disagree Tend to disagree Definitely disagree

Would you say that: (please tick one answer):

- Most people in your neighbourhood have seen and appreciate the red kites
- Many people in your neighbourhood have seen and appreciate the red kites
- A few people in your neighbourhood have seen and appreciate the red kites
- People may have seen kites but are indifferent to them
- Nobody in your neighbourhood has seen red kites

Is there anything else you would like to add?

.....
.....

Part 4 - Red Kites & Quality of Life



How do you believe that the return of the red kites has affected your 'Quality of Life' (please tick one answer)?

- Very positively
- Positively
- No change
- Negatively
- Very negatively

How does seeing a red kite make you 'feel' (please circle one answer)?

- Bad
- Less Good
- Indifferent
- Great
- Fantastic

Before the return of the red kites (from 2004), how would you rate your:

- | | | | | | |
|-----------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| General mood | <input type="checkbox"/> Excellent | <input type="checkbox"/> Very good | <input type="checkbox"/> Good | <input type="checkbox"/> Fair | <input type="checkbox"/> Poor |
| Self-confidence | <input type="checkbox"/> Excellent | <input type="checkbox"/> Very good | <input type="checkbox"/> Good | <input type="checkbox"/> Fair | <input type="checkbox"/> Poor |
| Self-motivation | <input type="checkbox"/> Excellent | <input type="checkbox"/> Very good | <input type="checkbox"/> Good | <input type="checkbox"/> Fair | <input type="checkbox"/> Poor |
| Social activity | <input type="checkbox"/> Excellent | <input type="checkbox"/> Very good | <input type="checkbox"/> Good | <input type="checkbox"/> Fair | <input type="checkbox"/> Poor |
| Mental health | <input type="checkbox"/> Excellent | <input type="checkbox"/> Very good | <input type="checkbox"/> Good | <input type="checkbox"/> Fair | <input type="checkbox"/> Poor |

After the return of the red kites (from 2004), how would you rate your:

- | | | | | | |
|-----------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| General mood | <input type="checkbox"/> Excellent | <input type="checkbox"/> Very good | <input type="checkbox"/> Good | <input type="checkbox"/> Fair | <input type="checkbox"/> Poor |
| Self-confidence | <input type="checkbox"/> Excellent | <input type="checkbox"/> Very good | <input type="checkbox"/> Good | <input type="checkbox"/> Fair | <input type="checkbox"/> Poor |
| Self-motivation | <input type="checkbox"/> Excellent | <input type="checkbox"/> Very good | <input type="checkbox"/> Good | <input type="checkbox"/> Fair | <input type="checkbox"/> Poor |
| Social activity | <input type="checkbox"/> Excellent | <input type="checkbox"/> Very good | <input type="checkbox"/> Good | <input type="checkbox"/> Fair | <input type="checkbox"/> Poor |
| Mental health | <input type="checkbox"/> Excellent | <input type="checkbox"/> Very good | <input type="checkbox"/> Good | <input type="checkbox"/> Fair | <input type="checkbox"/> Poor |

Since the return of the red kites, has anything happened that has helped change your physical and emotional wellbeing (please tick)?

- Had an operation
- Change in medication
- Change in personal circumstances
- Other (please state)

Do you feel that your health and wellbeing has been affected as a direct result of the return of the red kites (please tick)?

- Improved
- No change
- No change (but might have declined if not for the kites)
- Declined

Are there any elements of the return of the red kites, that you feel may have helped change your physical and emotional wellbeing (please tick)?

- Undertaking more activities (e.g. walking in green environment)
- More social interactions (e.g. chatting about kites)
- Seeing the kites
- Seeing other wildlife
- Other (please state)

To what extent do you agree or disagree that the return of the red kites has helped local people become more interactive with one another (e.g. as a point of conversation)? Please tick one answer.



- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neither Agree or Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

Is there anything else you would like to add?

Part 5 - About You

The information given in this section is confidential and will help the researchers with the analysis of the data. We would be grateful if you could complete this as fully as you feel able to. Please tick the relevant boxes:

Gender: Male Female

Age group:

- Under 20 yrs
- 20-29 yrs
- 30-39 yrs
- 40-49 yrs
- 50-59 yrs
- 60-69 yrs
- 70+ yrs

What is your postcode?

How long have you/your household been living in this area (please tick)?

- Under 1 year
- 1-2 years
- 3-5 years
- 6-10 years
- 11-20 years
- 21 or more years
- Don't know/can't remember

Home ownership (please tick one box). Are you:

- A home owner
- Buying your own home
- Renting accommodation – social housing private landlord other
- Living with family/friends
- Other (please state details)

Employment status (please tick one box):

- Employed/self employed (full-time)
- Employed/self employed (part-time)
- Retired
- Unpaid voluntary work
- Student/training scheme
- Looking after home/family
- Not working due to illness/disability
- Other (please state)

Income. Please tick the box that best describes your total annual household income (from all sources).

- Under £10,000
- £10,001-£15,0000
- £15,001-£20,0000
- £20,001-£30,0000
- £30,001-£45,0000
- Above £45,000
- Other



To which of these groups do you consider you belong?

- White British/Irish
- Any Other White background (please write in)
- Mixed - White & Black Caribbean
- Mixed - White & Black African
- Mixed - White & Asian
- Any Other Mixed background (please write in)
- Asian Indian
- Asian Pakistani
- Asian Bangladeshi
- Asian British
- Any Other Asian background (please write in)
- Black Caribbean
- Black African
- Black British
- Any Other Black background (please write in)
- Chinese
- Other ethnic group (please write in)
- Any Other group (please write in)

What is your Religion, even if you are not currently practising? TICK ONE ONLY

- Christian (including Church of England, Catholic, Protestant and all other Christian denominations)
- Buddhist
- Hindu
- Jewish
- Muslim
- Sikh
- Any other religion (please write in)
- No religion

Do you consider yourself to be

- Heterosexual
- Gay or lesbian
- Bisexual
- Other
- Prefer not to say

Do you consider yourself to have a disability? Yes/No

If you answered yes, what is the nature of this disability?
.....

Do you feel this disability has affected your access to the red kites? Yes/No

If yes, in what way?

Thank you for your time in answering this questionnaire.

If you have any questions regarding this questionnaire or would like to discuss it further, please contact Northern Kites Project on (0191) 496 15555 or e-mail at info@northernkites.org.uk

Northern Kites - Social Impacts & Attitudes Study 2008



Appendix 4 – Northern Kites – Project Objectives

From the start, it was the Northern Kites Project's intent to show a flagship biodiversity project, could illustrate the importance of a healthy environment in relation to many aspects of modern life. By using the red kites as an icon for all of the North East's wildlife, ultimately, Northern Kites aimed to highlight the value and benefits that are conferred upon the region by all of the region's biodiversity.

The Northern Kites over-arching Project Objectives fell into four work-themed areas of:

- Conservation/Wildlife
- People
- Economics
- Partnership.

The specific objectives in each of these themed work areas are listed below:

Conservation Objectives

- Successfully release at least 80 red kites between 2004-2007
- Re-introduce kites in a semi-urban landscape in North East England
- Establish a sustainable population of breeding red kites in North East England within 3 years of the Project commencing
- Monitor the movements and breeding success of red kites until 2009 or until a breeding population of 15 pairs is established
- Establish a red kite monitoring group to carry out longer-term monitoring of the red kite population
- Raise awareness of birds of prey as an important component of our biodiversity
- Use the red kite to celebrate the North East's biodiversity
- Raise public awareness of biodiversity issues by promoting the red kite as a flagship species for the North East

People

- Establish opportunities for people to see and learn more about red kites and biodiversity
- Train local people in a range of skills relevant to wildlife conservation which will benefit others and the environment
- Deliver a lifelong learning outreach programme within local communities and an events programme on and off-site centring around red kites as a gateway to a wider understanding of biodiversity, and through promotion to increased tourism and income generation



Economic objectives

- Use red kites to demonstrate the value of biodiversity to the local and regional economy
- Through the Project, stimulate support (funding, policy) for wider biodiversity initiatives in the region

Partnership objectives

- To gain support (e.g. funding, project endorsement) for the project from the Regional Assembly, Government Office North East (GONE), the Regional Development Agency (One North East)
- Develop a successful partnership between conservation organisations, local communities, business and key regional stakeholders



Appendix 5 – Gibside Estate Visitor Survey Form



Northern Kites Visitor Survey

Red Kites are big beautiful birds of prey that have been returned to the northeast after an absence of almost 200 years.

Red Kites were released at Gibside between 2004 and 2006 and are regularly seen here by visitors.

Please take a few minutes to answer the following questions and post your completed survey in the red kite post box near the tearoom.

Before your visit today had you heard of the Northern Kites Project?

YES **NO**

Before your visit today had you ever seen a red kite in the northeast?

YES **NO**

Did you see a red kite today while you were at Gibside?

YES **NO**

What is the date today?

If you would like to leave your postcode, it will help us to see how far the kite message has spread!

