

Environment workshop



18th June 2021

together
we are
the **network**

Thank you

Thank you again to those of you who joined us for our Environment Workshop on 22nd April 2021. We got a great deal out of the session and we hope you did too.

Overview of key themes from workshop

We dedicated April's workshop to discussing biodiversity, including understanding stakeholder's biodiversity priorities and views regarding where and when NGN should invest in biodiversity enhancements, in addition to identifying actions NGN can take to encourage biodiversity on our landholding and work sites.

Your feedback:

- Stakeholders prioritise equally all aspects of biodiversity and believe NGN should invest to encourage biodiversity on all our own land and work sites.
- NGN's infrastructure sites do have operational constraints, but there are techniques and methods that can be applied to encourage biodiversity without compromising safety and security.
- Small, integrated improvements across several sites can deliver large cumulative benefits across a large landholding, many of which can be introduced at minimal cost.
- Sharing information and knowledge with employees can increase the benefits delivered.

A detailed account of the workshop discussions and feedback is provided later in this document.

Best wishes,

Charlie Eddington

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Northern Gas Networks

Hannah Jewison

Business Sustainability Lead
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Neil Whalley

Environment and Sustainability Manager
Northern Gas Networks

Purpose of the workshop

The purpose of the workshop was to understand stakeholder's views and priorities regarding encouraging biodiversity on NGN's landholding and work sites, and to identify measures that can be taken to do so.

The agenda for the workshop was as follows:

- Summary of our business and regulatory setting
- Overview of Biodiversity
 - What is it?
 - Why it is important now
 - What can we do to fix it
- Biodiversity and NGN
 - What NGN's landholding looks like and how we currently manage it
- Overview of our recent activities to encourage biodiversity
- Our commitment for the future, including performance reporting
- Stakeholder biodiversity priorities

- Discussion groups
 - What is best practice to encourage biodiversity (what are you doing)?
 - What can NGN do with our sites to encourage biodiversity?

Feedback received:

"It was a great format and just the right length of time."

"There were several expert groups in the cohort which enriched the discussion. The facilitation was VERY professional. A great pace was also set for the event – manageable and of sufficient detail."

"This was a well-designed, professional event with great participation and facilitation."

19

delegates

8.7

overall satisfaction with the event (out of 10)

Acting on your feedback – our commitments

The feedback you gave us during this workshop is helping to shape the way we work both now and in the future.

| You Said | So we will |
|--|---|
| All aspects of biodiversity are equally important | Continue to look for improvements to prioritise a broad range of biodiversity, rather than focussing on specific aspects |
| There are many different practical actions we can take to encourage biodiversity from installing ponds and nesting bricks, to changing how we manage our vegetation. | We will review these ideas with our landscape management team to see which we could do. |
| Changing grass mowing regimes can deliver biodiversity benefits with limited extra, or even less, effort than current | Investigate our landscape maintenance regime and talk to our landscape management team to look for opportunities to make positive changes; and communicate the 'No Mow May' initiative with our colleagues to encourage them to get involved. |
| We can make a bigger impact by educating our workforce and encouraging them to make positive changes in their own homes and communities | Identify what information we could share and how we could share it to get maximum benefit. |

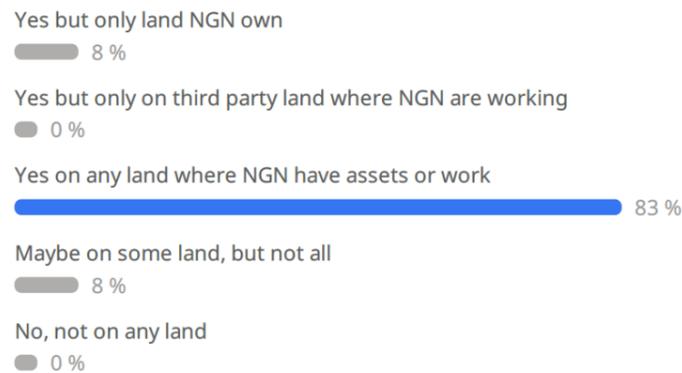
Key themes emerging from this workshop

Stakeholder Priorities

During the workshop stakeholders strongly identified that NGN should invest in encouraging biodiversity on our work sites, regardless of who owns the land we are working on.

Stakeholders showed no preference or priority regarding which elements of biodiversity should be encouraged, with flora, insects, birds, pollinators and animals all being regarded equally important.

Should NGN invest in helping biodiversity on our work sites (choose 1):



What can NGN do to encourage biodiversity?

Stakeholders recognised the constraints under which NGN are required to manage operational infrastructure land, but still identified many positive, low cost steps that can be taken to encourage biodiversity if we think a little differently:

- It was recognised that low or no maintenance methods are likely to be best suited to NGN land.
- Small solutions employed at many individual sites can produce a larger overall benefit for a disperse landholding like NGN's.
- It is worth considering how NGN can work with adjacent landowners to maximise positive biodiversity impacts.
- NGN should not just focus on making impacts at their larger, enclosed infrastructure sites. Works undertaken on third party grass verges can be planned to minimise impacts to biodiversity by adopting trenchless techniques where possible and reducing the overall work footprint.
- Are there opportunities to work with communities on vegetated NGN owned land outside the infrastructure site fenceline?
- NGN could deliver more benefits by engaging their workforce to make changes in their own homes and communities.

Practical things NGN could do:

- Ponds of any size can offer biodiversity benefits.
- Grassed areas can be managed differently to encourage biodiversity, typically mowing less often and not cutting the grass as short, aligning with initiatives such as 'No Mown May'.
- Rockeries can offer benefits to insects as a source of moisture from condensation as the climate changes to warmer and drier summers.
- Fruiting trees could be planted where permitted, for example in the site extremities, to encourage birds and pollinators.
- Buildings two storeys high or greater can be fitted with universal nesting bricks (also known as 'swift bricks') to provide habitat.
- Tall, flat roofed buildings can be covered with coarse gravel to provide nesting habitat for birds.
- NGN could consider installing hedging along site boundaries as an alternative to traditional fencing.
- Other businesses have partnered with local beekeeping groups and have hives situated on their properties.
- Do NGN have any land available to establish a demonstrator site to test whether alternative vegetation management techniques for infrastructure sites are appropriate and safe?

Next Steps:

We want to keep the conversation going. Zoom worked well again and we will continue to use this platform. However, we are still looking at how we can interact better by providing more details about the attendees and greater networking opportunities. Aside from the planned engagement activities, we welcome your ideas on any aspects of our business and the work that we are doing together.

Feedback on this session. Have you had further thoughts on some issues raised during this session? Or a great idea of things we should be doing in response to your feedback? We'd love to know. Please contact us directly on stakeholder@northerngas.co.uk

Event Evaluation and Future Engagement

3 responses out of 19 attendees

| Summary: Environment Workshop | | Thursday 22nd April 2021 | |
|-------------------------------|--|---|---|
| Event Evaluation | | | |
| Q1 | Choose 2 words from this list below to describe this event | Insightful, interesting (Also - creative) | |
| Q2 | Overall, how satisfied were you with the event? | 8.67 (overall) | |
| Q3 | How would you rate the discussions? | 9.00 | |
| Q4 | How would you rate the event contact and speakers? | 9.67 | |
| Q5 | How would you rate the networking opportunities? | 9.00 | |
| Q6 | Is there anything you think could be improved / changes for future workshops? | Key themes - Delegates commented that they would appreciate further networking opportunities | |
| Q7 | Is there anything else you would like to tell us? | Key themes - "Sharing LinkedIn details at the end could be a great way to stay connected and share ideas in the future." "I'm impressed by what NGN are doing to improve biodiversity." | |
| Q8 | Thinking of yourself as a stakeholder of NGN, how satisfied are you with the relationship that you have with NGN | 9.33 | |
| Q9 | To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? | | |
| | NGN keeps me up to date on their business plans | Agree | 1 |
| | | Neither agree nor disagree | 2 |
| | NGN provided me with clear information about their business performance | Agree | 1 |
| | | Neither agree nor disagree | 2 |
| | NGN provided me with opportunities to give feedback on the topics that interest me | Agree | 1 |
| | | Somewhat Agree | 2 |
| | NGN allows me to give feedback through my preferred method | Agree | 1 |
| | | Somewhat agree | 1 |
| | | Neither agree nor disagree | 1 |
| | NGN makes it clear how they have used feedback to change | Agree | 1 |
| | | Somewhat agree | 1 |
| | | Neither agree nor disagree | 1 |

| Future Engagement | | |
|-------------------|---|--|
| Q1 | How else would you like to engage with NGN in future? | "More workshops." "As is works fine." |

Tell us what you think

Thank you for reading this report. We welcome any further feedback, thoughts or ideas you have. Please drop us a line at stakeholder@northerngas.co.uk

For further information contact:
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