**Shared Interest Group**: Environment - 11th March 2025, 10.30am – 12.30

**Venue:** Applecast Newburgh

**Attendees**

Rhys Mahon Deafway

Rod Noon Groundwork CLM

Shirley Carr Skelmersdale Heritage Society

Margaret Abel Parbold Wildlife Groups

Mary Wilson Crawford Village Tree Warden Group

Karen Donnely Crawford Village Tree Warden Group

Martin Wilson Crawford Village Tree Warden Group

Jan Rimmer Crawford Village Tree Warden Group

Sam Marine Groundwork CLM

Dave Gibson Friends of Tawd Valley

Don Brookes Friends of Tawd Valley

Peter Meadows Friends of Tawd Valley

Paul Cotterill SWLICAN

Chris Rimmer West Lancs Footpath Groups

Neil Farnworth Applecast

**Apologies**

Deborah Reardon Women’s Institute

**Speakers**

**Neil Farnworth - Applecast**

* Overview of organisation/ challenges/ opportunities
* History – set up in 2006
* Fishing as a hobby/interest alternative education for young people involved in ASB. Started with 8 young people this rose to 80 within 6 months. As a way of getting YP back into school. Saw a massive increase in need following covid.
* Now also provide education and training opportunities for adults with disabilities and this year have had 190 referrals.
* Next year are opening an independent (fee paying) school and profit from this will go back into the community.
* Visitor and family centre - £5 per car.
* Currently they are seeing lots of issues across the board mostly with rising costs. Any way that a network can help would be welcomed.

**Helen**

Network Update survey results area-based networks, possibly 2 per area on an annual basis.

Thematic groups update – These may evolve in different ways depending on the wants and needs of the group members.

**Paul Cotterall – SWLICAN** (slides provided)

**Community Energy Project**

* £98,000 secured for a stage 2 study focusing on 3 sites in Skelmersdale, solar and wind power, Whitemoss landfill half mile island and WLBC flats in Tanhouse.
* Hope is that power generated will be used and excess sold to raise money for infrastructure.
* To raise funding for the project will be done through Community Benefit Society which can sell shares to the community.
* It is important that Community engagement is done.
* Government funding through Climate Action Fund over next 3- 5 years WLBC could bid for this. Need a consortium of communities to come together to facilitate the process.
* Next stage would be a planning meeting of all interested parties.

**Rob Noon & Sam Marine - Groundwork CLM** ( Slides provided)

* Green Community Hubs and Northern Network
* Membership is free
* Offer support to community groups to develop green space in the community.
* Offer one year of support which includes
* Community Consultation
* Project planning
* Funding application support
* Capacity Building
* Volunteer recruitment and support

**Group Exercise-** looking at thechallenges organisations face/ Aspirations / How the network can help find solutions. Groups discussion.

**Challenges**

* Vandalism
* Maintaining new committee members
* Funding sources, membership costs, & writing bids.
* Attracting volunteers
* Raising awareness of organisations, services and projects
* Educating and engaging the youth.
* Promotion – getting the word out there.
* Events – capacity to attend
* Digital and social media platforms- Design Skills, Web Design.

**Aspirations**

* Improve the site,
* Get the message out
* Share Knowledge
* Share funding ideas
* Develop provision for all ages
* To forge links with other community groups through networking and attending events like today.
* Engaging schools

**How can the network help?**

* Work together on bigger projects
* Working with other groups, visit each other
* Overcome the challenges identified- by networking, sharing knowledge and exspertise.
* Blue Sky, social platforms
* Sign posting via CVS
* Old school print media
* Website up to date
* Eligibility for funding

**Connections and feedback**

* Litter picking events and national week with Tawd Valley Park and ??? will work together
* Groundworks to work with Deafway to look at sustainable heat source for a outdoor classroom.
* Hesketh Bank allotments and Crawford Village Hut to sign up with Groundworks
* Crawford Village, Friends of Tawd Valley Park and Hesketh Bank to arrange visits to each other sites.