Dynamic Dunescapes Dune Engagement Case Study

Managing dune systems and golf courses for wildlife - networking event hosted by Dynamic Dunescapes Cymru – September 2022

Sand dune system	Wales – online engagement & knowledge exchange workshop
Case Study Subject	Managing dune systems and golf courses for wildlife - networking event hosted by Dynamic Dunescapes Cymru
The Engagement Intervention	

Background information

Golf and sand dunes are inextricably linked in the UK with many golf clubs in Wales being custodians of a large proportion of sand dunes landscapes. Some of these clubs have been where they are today for over a century. As such the aim of this event was to raise awareness of support available from 'conservation management practitioners' to 'golf clubs' and collect feedback from golf clubs on what support they would find helpful. Furthermore, the session aimed to provide a platform for knowledge exchange between 'conservation management practitioners' to 'golf clubs'.

What was the change you hoped to make?

- To raise awareness of support available from 'management practitioners' to 'golf clubs' and collect feedback from golf clubs on what support they would find helpful
- To provide information on GeoAward successes by relevant parties
- To support relationships with golf clubs
- Raising profile on dune restoration projects in Wales with key stakeholders

What was the suggested intervention?

To work with key local partners to develop an online networking and knowledge exchange workshop on managing dune systems and golf courses for wildlife, set in the context of sustainable development of existing links golf courses. We sought to work with the Dunes 2 Dunes project whom have just completed their successful collaborative project with Pyle & Kenfig Club and the Royal Porthcawl Club.

We intended to run a pilot workshop demonstrating both interest and necessity of providing such support to both 'conservation management practitioners' to 'golf clubs'. The session would be aimed at investigating possible key audiences for future work focused on ecoawards & golf courses / working with golf courses/clubs to manage nature

It was also a chance to provide an opportunity for skills development, learning about green initiatives for key stakeholders by working with key golf and conservation organisations to curate content.

What did you do and how?

We consulted with both land management staff at Natural Resources Wales and other project partner organisations, as well as golf club staff to determine what content would be useful. Following this we approached a diverse range of speakers, and worked with multiple different organisations to put together a 2.5 hour online workshop.

Quick-fire talks during the workshop were organised, focusing on a range of themes:

- Changing management in a changing landscape
- Sustainability and GEOaward certification
- Volunteers and conservation
- Sand dunes and biodiversity

Who did you work with? / How did you engage with different groups?

- Royal Porthcawl golf club
- Kenfig National Nature Reserve
- Wales Golf
- Sands of LIFE project
- Pyle & Kenfig Golf club
- Dunes 2 Dunes
  *click to visit websites

By working with representatives from both sectors we were able to better reach out to relevant stakeholder contact and encourage advertisement of the event across their networks. We also promoted the event across various newsletters and social media platforms

How was the event monitored?

We recorded the number of attendees, gathered feedback using bespoke questionnaires, and plan to share a following up questionnaire in 2023.

What modifications, if any, did you make to your initial plan and why?

Following the event we have since added a ‘pre-event’ networking document to our future online events, where knowledge exchange and networking is the goal. This is essentially an excel file where

people add their name, location and organization. Email is optional - in fact, we found encouraging this during the session rather than pre session was more impactful.

In the online session we had time allotted for discussion at the end, but attendees did not choose to really engage and therefore the event finished slightly early. Since this event, we have changed how we use discussion time by providing a framework for discussion rather than just time for questions. If questions are many than the framework for discussion can be dropped.

Highlight any issues/obstacles & how you overcame them?

We didn't reach all links club in Wales and we have since shared the recordings with them to aid that. The aim is that recordings will also eventually be available on our YouTube channel

The event was Wales focused from the Wales team, there was attendees from England who expressed interest in a similar England based event. This expression of interest was passed onto the wider Dynamic Dunescapes team

How much did the intervention cost?

Nothing, all attendees and speakers joined for free.

Did the intervention work?

Please describe how. What has changed?

The event demonstrated the desire for further events, support and information of this nature, in particular celebration and sharing events. This was shared with partners who were involved in presenting or planning

External feedback

Messages from individuals that were involved in presenting or planning

- Found the workshop useful to meet other professionals interested in managing dune systems and golf courses for wildlife
- A useful pilot

Comments from attendees

Following the event bespoke event questionnaires were shared, four respondents replied, in summary:

- The content was viewed as useful

- Attendance came through a variety of pathways including direct invite and word of mouth
- Content was encouraging to the attendees in giving them the motivation and trust in what they are doing as well as showcasing positive work by golf course management teams ‘ The operations we are carry out are going to be successful. Spread the word and encourage others. Golf course do preserve and enhance dune environments’
- Attendees were likely to act upon the information they received (follow up questionnaires will be sent around)
- The range of speakers was well received as well as the presentation format
- The networking section was received to mixed reviews – a known challenge of online workshops