



Job Title:	Living Tees Development Manager (July 2026)
Purpose of the role	
Living Tees – A catchment-wide initiative supporting our natural world and those who visit and live within it. Living Tees Project Vision The vision of this project is to create a vibrant, connected River Tees corridor along which communities are inspired to improve, explore, care for, and celebrate their river. Through improved access, inclusive engagement, and shared learning, the project will enhance local wellbeing, deepen understanding of the natural environment, and foster lasting stewardship of the Tees landscape Working closely with the Your Tees Catchment Partnership (YTCP), the Tees Rivers Trust (host for this position) and many additional stakeholders, your role will be to lead, inspire and develop a coherent narrative for a catchment based Living Tees Project. Overview The YTCP have an opportunity to develop a meaningful blue and green corridor project within the Tees catchment, using the river (and key tributaries) as well as the Teesdale Way as linear reference points through which to develop opportunities for change, across a number of themes. This 18-month position has been made possible through the Northumbrian Water Bluespaces “Feasibility Project for Water Environment Improvements” grant, being awarded to the YTCP. This funding being awarded to the YTCP will provide a unique opportunity to further consolidate, refine and consult with stakeholders as ideas and proposals become more grounded within a clearer and robust project narrative. This is a ground-breaking opportunity to facilitate a project of lasting significance for the River Tees and those who walk and access it through many and varied leisure activities, visit and holiday within the catchment or work and live within its many communities and tributaries. The entire project sits under the Catchment Based Approach (CaBA) framework. This initial and early development and feasibility phase allows for the YTCP to focus time and resource in developing key themes through a more well-defined and robust project narrative. Much has already been achieved in developing ideas and concepts and there is an appetite within the YTCP for this project to gain traction and support local change. The role will work across this wide and varied stakeholder base and riverine landscape in supporting a concept to become a well rounded and inspired narrative with support from many levels. Within this period, its is intended to apply for the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF), both an Expression of Interest after around 6 months and a Development Phase Application a year later. Opportunities The catalyst for this catchment-wide, partnership-led initiative came from a 2024/25 review of YTCP’s Catchment Action Plan, conducted via three thematic Task and Finish (T&F) groups, (Water Quality and Biodiversity, Access and Stewardship, and Climate Resilience). The outcomes of these themed reviews now need interweaving within a coherent narrative for achieving the project vision above.	

The existing Teesdale Way is a nationally significant walking route that is widely recognised as being under-utilised and which, with co-ordination and effort, could bring many benefits to the local economy, amenity as well as health and well-being.

Through improved access, inclusive engagement, and shared learning, the project will also deepen understanding of the natural environment and foster lasting stewardship of the Tees landscape.

Opportunities include physical improvements to the Teesdale Way and other recognized routes in the catchment, promoting local guardianship through support and engagement with community groups and organisations; better identification of the economic benefits that the river brings (e.g. tourism); and providing education to enhance understanding and appreciation of the water and riparian environment.

There is a demand for greater access and ownership of the health of the Tees and its tributaries, evidenced recently by individuals signing up to be 'River Guardians'. The Leven Catchment Group has also become more active, Parish Councils and Local Authorities keen to engage with flood and climate resilience, and angling clubs and volunteers engaging in Riverfly training, invasive species control and other citizen science initiatives. This groundswell of interest and engagement has the potential to be more formalised and better connected within a catchment wide narrative.

As a dedicated full time resource, you will support the next phase in development through moving a loosely structured project vision and proposal, to a vibrant and connected funding proposition.

Responsibilities

- Create a robust draft project narrative with clear objectives, indicative costs, resource requirements and timelines
- Create a stakeholder mapping matrix using the River Tees and Teesdale Way as primary reference points and explore with the YTCP partners, existing or aspirational project pipelines sharing the feasibility and development themes.
- Working with the Leven Catchment Group (a tributary of the Tees and active as a defined 'catchment group') to facilitate discussion around local aspirations, plans and intentions within the project themes, whilst considering possible access links between the Teesdale Way and the Leven Catchment.
- Widen stakeholder engagement beyond those active within the YTCP and Leven Catchment Group to fully understand catchment wide potential for change, from source to sea.
- Build upon and expand conversations with community groups, schools and other education establishments, local government and community hubs within the context of the project's developmental themes.
- Develop a matrix of funding opportunities (in addition to the National Lottery) ranging from traditional fundraising (e.g. Trusts and Foundations, Corporate, high-net philanthropy), to emerging markets such as Green Finance and Natural Flood Management (NFM) opportunities.
- Work closely with key people and agencies within the YTCP to consider a possible Project Delivery structure that supports the work being undertaken (this may fall within the NLHF Development Phase)
- Present project themes and intentions to a wide and varied audience and share feedback and updates at the quarterly meetings of the YTCP and Leven Catchment Group.

Skills & Experience

Skills

- Excellent ability to build and maintain meaningful relationships across a wide range of stakeholder groups.
- Exceptional ability to communicate with a wide ranging and varied audience.
- An ability to communicate often complex and interwoven narratives whilst remaining engaging and clear.
- Ability to understand and interpret multi-organisational strategic aims and identify and communicate where commonality exists and potential for collaborative working.
- Understanding of, or an ability to grasp, catchment related policy and frameworks, opportunities and best practice.
- Excellent understanding of how to manage and develop an emerging project given the complexities and multi-faceted stakeholder priorities.
- Proven ability to create a clear, concise and agreed narrative from a wide range of stakeholder interests.

Experience

- Managing large or landscape scale projects at development and/or delivery stage, ideally within the environmental sector.
- Experience of working in an environment of competing priorities from a wide and varied stakeholder base.

- Successfully developing significant funding proposals within a competing matrix of funding priorities and expectations.
- Developing a project 'case for support' and communicating via varied media to a wide audience, potentially within a consultation phase of a projects development.
- Experience of developing and accessing networks through which new working relationships are facilitated.
- Experience of working within a dynamic team.
- An ability to be self starting and intuitive whilst being highly organised and confident when leading a project of this nature.

Please Note: This role has sufficient flexibility to be able to adapt to feasibility findings and developmental opportunities, whilst staying within the linear River Tees and Teesdale Way reference points. The role will be supported by the YTCP partners as well as the team at the Tees Rivers Trust and YTCP Catchment Co-ordinator, also based at the Tees Rivers Trust.

Salary and Benefits

Salary - Circa £40,000 per annum

Start Date – Ideally September 2026 or soon thereafter.

Working hours - 40 Hours per week. Full time, flexible hours. The nature of the post's duties may from time-to-time require evening and weekend work.

The position would be based at the Darlington offices of the Tees Rivers Trust. Hybrid working is acceptable.

Holiday - 25 working days (full-time) per annum in addition to 8 normal public holidays.

Application Process

Using the skills and experience expectations above, please send a 2-sided covering letter sharing what you might bring to this role. Please also include a brief CV with details of referees (they will not be contacted unless successful).

We aim to be flexible and run candidate selection via a rolling interview process, although depending upon the level of interest, we may take a more formal approach.

The application process will be coordinated by Ian Prouder, YTCP Catchment Coordinator, and I'm happy to be contacted should you wish to informally discuss any of the above

Email – ian@teesriverstrust.org

Mobile – 07976 742243