***Banks Group***

Northumberland Wildlife Trust trustees have decided not to continue with Banks Group as a corporate member in the light of intensifying concern over the impact of coal extraction on global warming.

During recent times, the Trust has worked very hard with Banks to find ways to secure a ‘net gain’ for nature from its Highthorn open cast proposal at Druridge Bay, which is adjacent to the SSSI reserve at Cresswell Pond.

However, in the end, the Trust had to strongly object as there were no guarantees that any new habitat would be managed long term for wildlife, nor that any group such as ourselves would be actively involved in making this happen. In addition, it became clear that coal extraction is becoming a critical problem with regard to climate change and species extinction. We expressed our concerns and we feel it is inappropriate to mine coal locally.

The Highthorn proposal is still being fought by Banks and a decision is expected at the end of May. If it is allowed to happen, it will fly in the face of all the Government’s statements on the state of nature and global warming. With the very emotional expression against climate change we are witnessing now from young people and Trust members, we find it unacceptable that Banks Group is still campaigning to extract coal at Highthorn and now at Dewley Hill, on the outskirts of Newcastle.

Because of this, we do not feel it is appropriate for Banks to continue as a corporate member of the Trust.

As a nature conservation organisation we will continue to work with most partners to secure gains for wildlife, but now, Banks Group are evidently working against our cause locally. This decision has not been made without considerable thought. We do respect Banks’ approach where they have demonstrated positive restoration and take sufficient account of climate change impacts.

The Trust still manages the Northumberlandia site which Banks originally constructed.

**Mike Pratt**

**Chief Executive**

**Northumberland Wildlife Trust**