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Four-Figure Grant Funds Alnwick Charity's Drive To Reduce Food Waste And Support Local Families

A North Northumberland charity's twin drive to reduce food waste and support local families facing food insecurity has received a four-figure boost from the Newcastle Building Society Community Fund at the Community Foundation Tyne & Wear and Northumberland.

Community @NE66 is working with a number of local supermarkets to ensure that fresh food which is reaching its sell by date, and which otherwise might have ended up being thrown away, can be made available to people that could use it.

The project focuses primarily on families living in the Clayport ward in Alnwick, but it is available to anyone living across north Northumberland and currently has around 250 people benefiting from it every week.

Community @NE66 also uses the service users' visits to its base at Alnwick Community Centre to assess whether any further support might be useful to them. The charity then either looks to deliver this itself or signpost people towards other local organisations.

The £4,732 grant, which is the second one that Community @NE66 has received, is now being used to help cover the project's running costs, which include making deliveries to people with additional needs and topping up supplies with specific items when required.

Founded in 2017 to bring several different community support activities together under one banner, Community @NE66 runs a range of youth development projects, including a parent and toddler group, a youth café, health and well-being sessions, holiday activity provision and parental support services.

It works closely with local schools and children's services to try to involve families that might benefit from accessing its service, and also makes referrals to additional services, such as housing and mental health support, where needs are identified.

It receives no statutory funding and needs to raise around £160,000 every year to meet its running costs, with the majority of this coming from grants and donations.

Hannah Moeini, project manager at Community @NE66, says: “Our work during and after the pandemic made it clear just how much fresh food was being disposed of by supermarkets that would be welcomed by people living in our community, so we set about finding ways to ensure it wasn’t wasted.

“The project’s impact has been two-fold, with the environmental benefit of reducing food waste adding to the reduction of food insecurity in an area that is recognised as having significant levels of deprivation.

“Having service users visit us to make collections means we can talk directly to them, assess whether any support with other issues might be required, and then refer them on to organisations that can provide this help if we can’t deliver it ourselves.

“We wouldn’t be able to be delivering what’s proving to be a highly valued and effective project without Newcastle Building Society’s support and we’re really grateful for their continuing backing for our community work.”

The Newcastle Building Society Community Fund at the Community Foundation Tyne & Wear and Northumberland offers grants to charities and community groups located in or around the communities served by the Society's branch network.

Greg Brown, manager at Newcastle Building Society’s Alnwick branch, adds: “The Community @NE66 has recognised a clear local need, a way of addressing it and the structure needed to do so.

“The positive impact that it’s having on the lives of hundreds of people across the local community is clear and we’re very pleased to be able to help them deliver this very effective project.”

Since its launch in 2016, Newcastle Building Society’s Community Fund at the Community Foundation has also contributed over £2.3m in grants and partnerships to a wide variety of charities and projects across the region, including the Sir Bobby Robson Foundation and the Prince’s Trust.

The grants are so far estimated to have had a positive impact on more than 151,000 people.

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About Newcastle Building Society

Newcastle Building Society* is the biggest building society in the North East, with a network of 31 branches and assets of more than £5.3bn. We've been here for our members for over 160 years.

As a leading local employer, we're committed to growing our region's talent and being a great place to work where people can realise their potential. We hold Platinum IIP and won the Excellence and Positive Impact Award at the 2022 CIPD North East of England HR&D Awards. We were named Company of the Year in the Northumberland and Tyneside category of the North East Business Awards 2022.

We help people to own their home, to save and to plan their finances through our range of products and services. We believe in the role of the high street at the heart of our communities and are proactive in making financial information and financial advice accessible across our region.

Our Financial Advice is provided through our Newcastle Financial Advisers Limited division**.

We're dedicated to helping our North East communities make positive changes; since 2016 the financial support through grants and donations from the Newcastle Building Society Community Fund at the Community Foundation to benefit local causes has surpassed £2.3m

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