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KIDS KABIN CHARITY TAKING NEW ECO-TRAILER ON THE ROAD FOR ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION WORKSHOPS

A North East children's charity is taking new environmental education workshops on the road with the help of Newcastle Building Society.

Kids Kabin runs a range of different workshops for young people in disadvantaged neighbourhoods in Newcastle and Middlesbrough, both from local community venues and using its selection of bike-powered mobile trailers in street locations.

Topics include pottery, cookery and woodwork, as well as bike repair sessions run in conjunction with Byker-based charity Recyke y'bike.

In response to a growing interest in environmental issues among its young people, Kids Kabin has now used a £2,925 grant from the Newcastle Building Society Community Fund at the Community Foundation Tyne & Wear and Northumberland to build and equip a new eco-trailer, which contains gardening equipment, litter pickers and even bike-powered smoothie makers.

The grant has also enabled the charity to put new some environmental education initiatives in place at its main centre in Walker, including two static bikes which are hooked up to small USB dynamos and which enable young people to get some exercise and charge their phones while waiting for workshops.

Up to 30 young people are attending each of the eco-workshops, which also involve attendees getting together to tidy up their neighbourhoods.

The charity has received positive feedback from residents of all ages about the positive impact the sessions are making on the local environment, and it is now working towards buying an electric cargo trike, which will allow for its trailers to be taken to more distant locations by more of its volunteers.

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.

It's the second time that Newcastle Building Society has supported Kids Kabin, with a £1,600 grant from the Community Fund given in 2019 supporting its workshop activities.

Will Benson, chief officer at Kids Kabin, says: "Taking our workshop trailers to street locations makes them as accessible as possible for young people who might not feel comfortable in a more formal venue, or might not be able to get there for any number of reasons, and it helps to break down barriers that might otherwise stop them taking part in something they'd enjoy.

"Our young people are extremely eco-conscious and want to know more about how to best look after the places they live.

"There are lots of small green spaces around the Byker area in particular and our young people are really enthusiastic about getting involved with tidying up these neighbourhoods, with the feedback we get from local people on the impact this work has

"This latest grant has helped us get this project up and running far more quickly than we otherwise could have and we're now working towards taking our workshops out to even more North East neighbourhoods."

Joanne Oskarsen-Stewart, Head of Environment and Sustainability at Newcastle Building Society, adds: "Kids Kabin takes a unique approach to giving young people across local communities the chance to experience and learn things that they couldn't otherwise access.

"The eco-trailer taps into an area that many young people are especially passionate about and we're very pleased to be helping the charity extend what it can offer to its service users."

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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