

Fenham Community Charity Meeting Growing Local Needs With Newcastle Building Society Grant Support

Dozens of families in Newcastle's West End are getting extra help and support thanks to the efforts of a longstanding city charity and funding from Newcastle Building Society.

The Fenham Association of Residents set up a community outreach project during the pandemic to help meet a range of urgent needs among vulnerable people within Fenham and Wingrove.

Having expected to see demand tailing off as the pandemic eased, the charity instead found that the cost of living crisis meant it was being sustained into 2023 and that extra help was needed by growing numbers of people facing financial difficulties and food poverty.

It is now using a £3,000 grant from the Newcastle Building Society Community Fund at the Community Foundation to help cover the increasing cost of delivering its core services, as well as providing financial and welfare advice from its Acanthus Avenue headquarters in Fenham.

Around 40 families and 100 people in total are receiving support from this ongoing project.

And it has also used some of the money to team up with traders at the Grainger Market to ensure that doorstep deliveries of fresh fruit and vegetables can be made to local residents who aren't able to get out for them themselves.

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

Originally set up in 1987, the Fenham Association of Residents works to provide support, direction, hope and encouragement to people living in Newcastle's west

end and to and providing opportunities for members of the community to enhance their lives.

It works in partnership with organisations including food redistribution service FareShare, business giving platform Neighbourly and Newcastle City Council's public health scheme to target help where its needed most in its community.

Mark Gowland, project manager at Fenham Association of Residents, says: "The cost of living crisis is having a real impact on every part of our community, with many people facing extremely difficult choices on a daily basis, and the need that we expected to drop off as the pandemic subsided is now stronger than ever.

"The local knowledge that we've built up and the links we've established with other organisations across the community means we're able to identify where the greatest needs lie and how they might best be addressed.

"Working with the fantastic traders at the Grainger Market and organising doorstep deliveries of fresh fruit and vegetables to people with physical or mobility problems means they're getting a much healthier diet than they otherwise would and gaining clear benefits to their well-being as a result.

"It's terrific to see the impact that our work is having across the community and we're getting lots of very positive feedback from local people and families about how it boosts their physical and mental health, especially when people are making meals together and sharing time with each other.

"This work wouldn't be happening without the funding we've received from Newcastle Building Society, and at a time of great need in our community, it's been an absolute lifeline."

Kelly Johnson, manager at Newcastle Building Society's West Denton branch, adds: "This is a true grass roots organisation that is dedicated to improving the lives of people living across its community.

"The positive local impact it makes is clear to see and we're very pleased to be helping this amazing charity extend its work within our home city."

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.

For more information on Sunderland Women's Centre's new computer skills course, please call 0191 567 7495.

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For further information on Newcastle Building Society, please contact:

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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 £4.9bn. We've been here for our members for over 150 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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