

Middlesbrough Families Getting Cooking And Shopping Support Through New Teesside Charity Initiative

Dozens of Teesside families have been getting new ideas for cooking meals and saving money thanks to a new project set up by a local charity.

The Middlesbrough Environment City Trust is using a £3,000 grant from the Newcastle Building Society Community Fund at the Community Foundation to run a series of free classes on how to use a slow cooker to prepare a range of nutritious, cost-effective family meals using affordable ingredients.

Around local 25 families have so far taken part in the course, with each being given their own slow cooker to take home and use for creating their own meals as well as trying out the ones that they've been preparing at the charity's Acklam premises.

The grant has also enabled the Trust to buy a new freezer in which any products that it receives for its weekly community Eco-Shop that are near their sell-by date can be stored to ensure they're not wasted.

Extra store cupboard products are also being purchased for the shop to help meet rising community demand.

Dozens of local people are now regularly visiting the Eco-Shop, which runs every Wednesday morning at the charity's Green Hub at Middlesbrough Bus Station and allows people to buy ten items for two pounds, most of which are supplied by local supermarkets through the FairShare food redistribution scheme.

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.

Founded in 1992, Middlesbrough Environment City works across the town to promote and encourage healthy and sustainable living, and works closely with

Middlesbrough Council and other public, voluntary, community and private sectors partners to deliver a diverse range of projects.

People taking part in the slow cooker course also have the chance to gain a food hygiene qualification, which could help them if they're looking for work in the hospitality sector.

Brian Simpson, director at The Middlesbrough Environment City Trust, says: "Everyone likes a ready meal or a takeaway sometimes, but not only is cooking using healthy ingredients better for you, it also tends to be much less expensive, especially when you know how to use more affordable ingredients to make them.

"The knowledge and ideas we're sharing are designed to give local families a greater range of meal options - and as well as being easy to use, slow cookers are also very cheap to run, which is especially important at the moment.

"The feedback we've had from the families that have taken part in the course has been fantastic and we've even had some of them regularly sending us photos of their latest slow cooker creations.

"Having the freezer on hand means we can store products that are approaching their sell-by date safely and bring them out when they're needed, so that none of the donations we receive get wasted.

"We simply wouldn't have been able to buy the freezer or run this course without the funding we received from Newcastle Building Society and their support it making a big difference to a great many local families.

Karl Elliott, brand and marketing director at Newcastle Building Society who recently visited the charity, adds: "This is a simple idea that will make a real difference to dozens of local families, in both the short and the long-term, and we're really pleased to be able to get behind the excellent work done by the whole Trust team."

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

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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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