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UTASS ENSURING FINANCIAL ADVICE AVAILABLE ACROSS LOCAL COMMUNITY WITH NEWCASTLE BUILDING SOCIETY SUPPORT

A County Durham charity's drive to help people living in remote parts of the Durham Dales cope with the rising cost of living is being supported by a four-figure grant from Newcastle Building Society.

Upper Teesdale Agricultural Support Services (UTASS) runs a range of different projects and services which are designed to help people living right across the area deal with issues they may be facing and to help maintain a safer, happier self-sustaining community.

Based in Middleton-in-Teesdale, the charity has seen an increase in the number of people looking for financial advice, as concerns grow across the country around the rising cost of living, and helps individuals regain control of their situations by finding the most appropriate means of support available.

The £3,000 Newcastle Building Society grant will help UTASS meet this growing demand and provide support to people looking to discuss their concerns and get their finances back on track.

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

As well as financial support, UTASS also organises a wide range of other events, services, training and activities for local people of all ages, including training, farm business support, youth drop-in sessions, retired farmers lunches, Music & Memories singing sessions, group trips and outings and other regular social sessions, such as discussion groups and weekly creative coffee mornings.

Space is available at its Middleton-in-Teesdale hub for groups to hold their own events, while it also runs a community transport service which makes two fully

accessible minibuses available for use by local people and organisations. The hub also hosts a satellite Post Office service two days a week.

Grace Crawford, funding & strategic development officer at UTASS, says: “Helping people feel supported within their local community is an essential part of what we do, and providing access locally to financial advice, is an important part of our work.

“Everyone knows that the increasing cost of living is providing real challenges right across the board and in rural communities like ours practical help can sometimes be difficult to find.

“We want people to know that we are here to help with financial worries, which we understand can be difficult to talk about, whether through advice we can offer ourselves or by helping people get support from other places.

“Through our longstanding presence in the Durham Dales we hope that people can trust us enough to ask for help when they need it.

“We are so grateful for the generous support offered from Newcastle Building Society towards our work and would like to say a huge thank you to all of the staff who help raise funds towards this Community Fund.”

Jonny Haram, manager at Newcastle Building Society’s Market Place branch in Barnard Castle, adds: “UTASS provides a brilliant example of how a community organisation can make a tangible difference to the quality of life that people in their area can enjoy.

“Connecting communities to a better financial future is absolutely central to the Society’s way of working and we’re very pleased to be supporting an initiative which aims for the same goal.”

Since its launch in 2016, Newcastle Building Society’s Community Fund has also contributed over £2.1m 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.

The Newcastle Building Society Community Fund is run in association with the Community Foundation Tyne & Wear and Northumberland.

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About Newcastle Building Society

Newcastle Building Society* is the biggest building society in the North East, with a network of 30 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 were voted Number 2, Best Places to Work in the North East in 2019.

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 £2.1m

www.newcastle.co.uk

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