

Photograph © Tees Valley Wildlife Trust



tees valley

Watching for wildlife on the Tees estuary

Not a lot of people know this, but water voles are thriving in Middlesbrough. The Grayling butterfly is doing well too, according to Liz Auty, biodiversity officer for Tees Valley Wildlife Trust. Tees Valley may be better known for its industrial landscape than for its wildlife but, according to Auty, the area's industrial history is one of the reasons why the local wildlife is so interesting.

'Furnace slag supports some unusual habitats,' she says. 'On the edge of the Tees, next to the Corus works, for example, there are some quite rare flowers - orchids, Common Centaury and Yellow-wort - and then there are the butterflies and bugs that go with them.'

Tees Valley Wildlife Trust was set up in 1979 and is one of 47 independent, local, charitable trusts in the UK working to create a better environment for wildlife and to involve residents in protecting and enjoying their natural heritage. One of the Trust's tasks is to coordinate the implementation of the Local Biodiversity Action Plan. The plan has been put together by a partnership of 16 organisations including the local authorities, English Nature, Tees Forest and Northumbrian Water. 'There is a national plan which shows which habitats and species are in danger nationally,' Auty explains. 'Our plan looks at how we can contribute at a local level.'

The Trust currently has 14 paid staff, 1,500 members and a large pool of volunteers. Auty, whose post is funded by Northern Rock Foundation, works with individuals and groups including schools, youth clubs and projects for people who have not been employed for a long time. Volunteers do anything from monitoring different species, to delivering Trust magazines, to hands-on work on one of the 12 nature reserves in Tees Valley.

'Sometimes a group of residents sees a need and we support them in doing something about it,' says Auty. 'That's what's happened at Spion Kop Cemetery in Hartlepool. The cemetery could take no more burials and local people were concerned that it would fall into decay. It is coastal grassland and supports some interesting habitats. They formed a group and are now recording sightings and protecting rare species.'

tales

The Tees Valley - Middlesbrough, Hartlepool, Redcar and Cleveland, Stockton-on-Tees and Darlington - has always benefited from the Foundation's funding, but it receives fewer grants than other parts of the North East and Cumbria. 'We don't have targets to spend equal amounts across the region,' says Rob Williamson, the Foundation's assistant director, 'but it does concern us if some areas are left out. The Tees Valley has a strong tradition of voluntary action, and we want to play our part in continuing that tradition.'

One Voice Tees Valley

One way the Foundation can do this is by investing in voluntary sector support organisations. One Voice Tees Valley (OVTV) is the area-wide development agency for the sector. OVTV began life as the Middlesbrough Guild of Hope nearly a hundred years ago. Norman Harrison, OVTV's manager, estimates there are currently 8,500 voluntary and community groups in the area. 'It's hard to be precise,' he says, 'because the voluntary and community sector responds to need. When someone thinks a job needs doing, they set up a group to do it.'

OVTV's job is as varied as the sector it represents. It works with agencies in the North East and Tees Valley to ensure that local voluntary and

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tees valley tales

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community organisations are benefiting from regional and national programmes. It makes joint funding applications on behalf of the sector, it sets up its own initiatives, and it provides services for local groups.

'Yes, we spend a lot of time working at a strategic level, with VONNE or the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) or Tees Valley Partnership,' says Harrison, 'but a big part of our job is helping groups with the information they need and with all the paperwork they have to do these days. We run training courses (on the new charities legislation, for example) but we also provide direct help, when people ask for it. One of the challenges is that groups don't always know what it is they don't know.'

Harrison doesn't hesitate to show his frustration with the bureaucracy caused by changes in the law and by the demands of some funders. He cites the challenges of narrow funding criteria, retrospective payment and monitoring requirements. OVTV's response has been to employ Rob Bradley as information and training officer (with funding from the Foundation) and to offer groups advice on sources of funding and making applications. OVTV is talking to the LSC about setting up a consortium that would offer groups a monitoring service. The relationship with the LSC has grown closer since the publication, last year, of **Working Together: a strategy for the voluntary and community sector and the Learning and Skills Council**. 'We look for partnerships wherever we can,' says Harrison.

OVTV is keen to see younger people coming into the voluntary and community sector and one of its proudest achievements is the creation of a

Faith Youth Panel. 'I think part of my job is to blend teams,' Harrison explains. 'This project was part of the New Deal for Communities pathfinder. I hired a young Muslim woman who worked in hospital radio in Middlesbrough and someone a bit older, with good presentation skills. It took 18 months to organise a single question and answer event in February, with young people of different faiths firing off questions and having their say.'

Positive attitude

Future Regeneration of Grangetown (FROG for short) is a good example of what can happen when local residents take the regeneration of their area into their own hands. Its slogan says it all: 'Tackling the negative with a positive attitude.'

We have always tried to follow the need rather than the funding

Grangetown is an area of Middlesbrough with a history tied to the steel industry. It has chronically high rates of unemployment (more than 60%) and is currently one of the poorest communities in England. FROG doesn't see it that way, as its manager, Kester Haith, explains.

'Grangetown had got some money from the Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) but it was running out. The residents weren't happy that the projects they had started weren't going to continue, so about 24 of them came together as the Future Group. That's what turned into FROG.'

They secured more money from SRB and a bit from the Community Fund and employed a member of staff. Haith was born in Grangetown but had worked away for many years.

The 14 directors of FROG had an awayday and agreed on what they were trying to achieve. The results have included a disability transport scheme (a large number of local residents are disabled or suffer from chronic ill health), a learning and mentoring programme, an environmental project and a cyber café for young people. 'We have always tried to follow the need rather than the funding,' says Haith.

Northern Rock Foundation is supporting the post of learning and skills coordinator. 'A few years ago, only two local people had been to university,' explains Haith. 'We had a trial period when Cleveland College brought courses to us, but to get the funding they had to have ten bums on seats and the emphasis had to be vocational. If the numbers fell, the course had to end. That was no good for the people who were left, so we decided to look for funding to do it independently.'

Getting students to stay on at school remains a challenge and there are a number of young people in Grangetown who have been excluded from school or refuse to go. Some of them got involved in the Doorstep Green project, a national scheme promoted by the Countryside Agency with funding from the New Opportunities Fund. FROG worked, initially, with residents whose houses were being demolished. 'The younger people said they wanted a skatepark and a motorbike park. We couldn't deliver that, so they came up with a cyber café as an alternative.'

Photograph © Allan Glenwright



Kester Haith (second from right) working with Grangetown residents on Millennium Green



Photograph © Simon Veit-Wilson

The Oasis Project, as the café is called, operates from a former shop and is run by staff and volunteers. For some young people, the project is providing other opportunities. One of the paid workers started as a volunteer, and earlier this year Haith took a small group of 13–15 year old cyber café users to a residential centre near Grimsby to do an Open College Network course in personal development. 'For most of them this is the first qualification they have got,' says Haith. 'It's a start.'

As a direct result of the Doorstep Green project, Grangetown now has an environmental team which looks after the area's grass and trees. FROG has created employment for adults too. Haith offers one recent example. 'We did a community audit and employed six local people to do it. Two of them dropped out for personal reasons, but four of them got permanent jobs. We can help people put applications together and do mock interviews. We can make them job ready so that when the opportunities come up, they can take them.'



Photograph © Simon Veit-Wilson

Singing hymns with the Hindu Cultural Society

FROG's ambition is to create employment locally, through its own social enterprises. The transport scheme is one example and Haith is confident that there will soon be others. 'For a lot of people who have been out of work for a long time or who have never worked, it's a question of confidence. If you can find work somewhere in or around Grangetown first, then sooner or later you will have the confidence to go further afield.'

Eating out

Lunch clubs are part and parcel of the voluntary sector landscape but the service the Hindu Cultural Society Cleveland (HCSC) provides is unique in the North East. In 1997, Krishan Nath, a recently retired head teacher and a president of the HCSC, contacted Middlesbrough Social Services. He wanted the local authority to consider providing vegetarian Indian meals on wheels. 'Six months later I had a reply,' Nath recalls. 'They said they couldn't help because they didn't have the cooks. My response was, if you give me the money, I will sort out the cooks, and I did.'

Today, the HCSC provides a hot vegetarian meal, five days a week, at its day care centre in North Ormesby. The day care centre, community centre and temple occupy a former warehouse bought by the Society in the 1980s. The complex serves 2,000 Hindus living in Tees Valley and welcomes visitors from all over the North East.

Five days a week, elderly members of the Hindu community are picked up from their homes, by minibus and brought to the centre for lunch. When the drivers take them home they deliver a meal to people who are housebound. The minibuses are also used to do shopping for people who can no longer do it for themselves. The Foundation's grant is paying for the drivers' time and the diesel.

'It is not just about the meals, it is also a social thing,' says Nath. 'This is an opportunity for people to see each other and they can use other services while they are here. The Citizens' Advice Bureau comes once a fortnight, three times a year we have a visit from the community nurse, and we are just about to introduce exercise classes - before lunch!'

More information

Liz Auty
Tees Valley Wildlife Trust
Bellamy Pavilion
Kirkleatham Old Hall
Kirkleatham
Redcar
Cleveland
TS10 5NW
Tel: 01642 759900
Email: earnold@teesvalleywt.cix.co.uk
Website: www.wildlifetrust.org.uk/teesvalley

Norman Harrison
One Voice Tees Valley
New Exchange Buildings
Queens Square
Middlesbrough
TS2 1AA
Tel: 01642 240651
Email: n.harrison@ovtv.org.uk
Website: www.ovtv.org.uk

Kester Haith
Future Regeneration of Grangetown (FROG)
The LINC Centre
24a The Bungalows
Grangetown
Middlesbrough
TS6 7SQ
Tel: 01642 467598
Email: k.haith@froguk.org
Website: www.frogforum.co.uk

Krishnan Nath
Hindu Cultural Society Cleveland
54 Westbourne Grove
North Ormesby
Middlesbrough
TS3 6AF
Tel: 01642 218428

What do you do when Christmas comes? What do you do when the cooker goes into meltdown? What do you do when the winter sets in hard and you want to turn the heating up?

If you have managed to put a little money by to cover the unexpected expenses that life throws your way then these things shouldn't be a problem. But, for the 1.5 million people in this country without credit, or a bank or savings account, one of the only remaining options is to borrow money from the local doorstep lender, at very high rates of interest.

Over the past 20 years, policy makers have looked to credit unions to provide an answer to this problem and no regeneration initiative worth its salt has failed to employ a credit union development worker at some point. However, despite the apparent simplicity of the solution, all has not gone to plan and doorstep lending continues to grow.

Shortly before Christmas 1998, the credit union sector was presented with a ground-breaking report.

Towards

Sustainable Credit Union Development,

by Paul A Jones, a senior lecturer at Liverpool John Moores University, posed two fundamental questions. Are credit unions growing and are they becoming economically self sustaining?

There are two main types of credit union: those based in places of work (employee credit unions) and those based in communities (community credit unions). Jones looked at a sample of 384 credit unions in England and Wales and concluded that only four of them were operating at a level that might enable them to be self-sufficient (i.e. not having to rely on grants to support their running costs). He found that while community credit unions made up 84% of his sample, they held only 30% of the assets. Employee credit unions, on the other hand, made up 15% of the total but boasted 70% of the assets. Jones also found that

membership figures in Scotland were much healthier than in England.

The new model credit union

The report highlighted a question that has beset the credit union movement in England. Is a credit union a business with social objectives or an organisation engaged in social engineering? Jones concluded that, to be successful, a credit union needs to be seen as a financial institution, with a business model at its core. He proposed a blueprint for what has become known as the new model credit union.

Credit unions are at a crucial stage in their development. They need to grow quickly to cover their increased running costs but for that growth to continue, beyond merging with their neighbours, they need to have a better understanding of the business they are in and who their customers are.

One of the reasons for the growth in the Irish credit union movement was the decision to discard the dogma of the ratio of loans to savings (i.e. the more you save, the more you can borrow). The Irish unions realised that this approach was not in the interest of the business, and some of the larger unions in England have begun to follow suit. Credit unions here are

limited to charging a maximum APR of

12.68%. For some of their higher risk

customers, this rate is too low to

cover the costs, while for

customers with the

freedom to shop around,

it may not be

competitive enough.

Doorstep lending

is a well

established

business and

credit unions

are beginning

to recognise

that breaking

into the

market will

take time,

money and

effort. New

business is won by

knocking on doors

and this involves a

significant investment.

In South Tyneside it has

begun to happen, with the

credit union having secured

funding to employ people to go out

and get the business. It is having some

success, dramatically reducing clients' weekly

repayments by consolidating their debts.

Scale within the credit union movement is

important. The bigger the union becomes the

more savings it attracts and this leads, in turn,

to a larger number of loans and more income.

It is a virtuous circle. Each credit union needs to

define its marketplace, learn how to

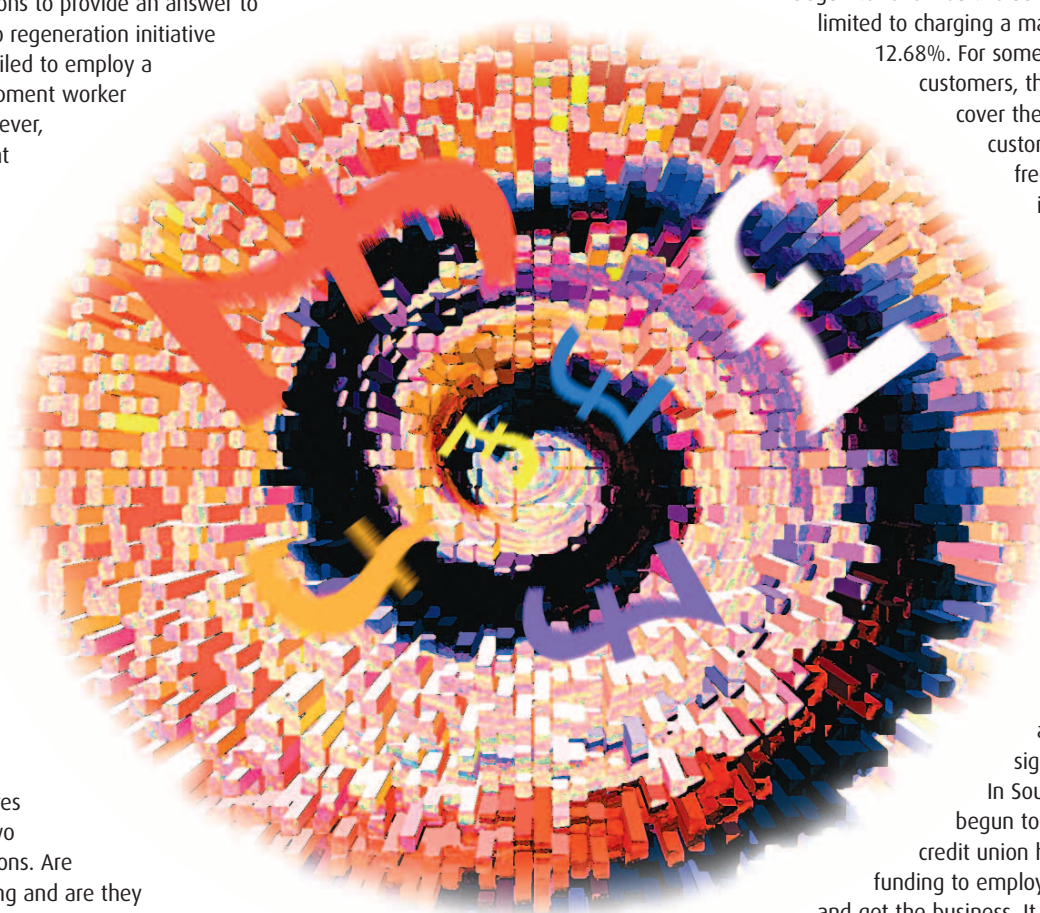
communicate effectively with its customers and

understand their needs. It is by meeting those

needs that credit unions will be more likely to

make a profit and become self sufficient.

Richard Walton manages the Foundation's Money and Jobs programme



In the North East this new model can be seen in the merger of many of the smaller credit unions to form larger institutions, employing paid staff and based in high street premises. In North Tyneside, for example, Northern Oak has 1,000 members; in Newcastle, Moneywise has over 4,500; South Tyneside Credit Union more than 3,000. In Sunderland, Wearside First is a bold attempt to build a new model credit union from scratch. With city centre premises and a large staff team, it is under pressure to build up its customer base very quickly.

eye of the fly

Photograph © Simon Veit-Wilson

Pelaw Industrial Estate, in Heworth Way, Gateshead is about to welcome some unusual new tenants. Later this summer, units three, four and five will become home to Eye of the Fly, a social enterprise that trades in graffiti (also known as aerosol art).

Eye of the Fly is the brainchild of Tor Bruce a one-time local reporter. Six years ago, Bruce left the North East to work as a photographer on cruise ships in the Caribbean. When his contract came to an end, he carried on travelling and taking photographs, meeting different kinds of people and selling his work. It was a life-changing experience.

'While I was travelling, I was developing my creative skills and my communication skills too. When I came back, I decided to try to work full time as an artist, but I knew I needed some business training first,' he explains. He went in search of training locally and spent 18 months on different courses.

'By the end of that, I was more interested in setting up a not-for-profit, creative business than a commercial one and that's where Eye of the Fly came from.' As someone who had spent most of his professional life looking at his surroundings, Bruce couldn't help noticing the huge amount of graffiti in the area. Still in his 20s, he had a lot of local contacts and began talking to them about setting up an organisation that would help the, mostly young, 'taggers' (graffiti artists) do something more constructive with their skills. The idea 'had legs' and four years ago, Eye of the Fly was born.

'A lot of the people who do graffiti get involved with crews (gangs) and they start running with

those crews,' Bruce explains. 'Eye of the Fly has tried to create its own networks, its own crew - loosely speaking.' The Eye of the Fly aerosol division is now being contracted by local authorities, community organisations and the business community to design and apply high quality graffiti in appropriate places. A recent project for South Tyneside's 4Shore Skatepark was typical. Part of the fee went to the artists and part to Eye of the Fly towards its running costs.

We are not just here for one project. We are here for the long term

'They are getting paid. They have free use of the aerosols and of Eye of the Fly's facilities. They get to work with each other. It's a good deal,' says Bruce. Securing a base has always been part of the plan and the premises in Heworth Way will give the organisation the opportunity to provide the artists with training as well as employment.

'We have looked at 12 different places in the last three years and this is the one,' says Bruce. One unit will become a studio for aerosol art, another will be for graphic design, film and photography and the third and largest will be turned into a gallery where members will show and sell their work at a Sunday art market.

'We are not just here for one project. We are here for the long term,' Bruce insists. 'We have funding from Northern Rock Foundation not just

for my salary [until earlier this year he was working as a volunteer] but also for a curriculum development consultant. The plan is to offer about ten art-based courses. We also want the public to come and see what we are doing and to buy the artists' work.'

Bruce's business training is undoubtedly helping him in his dealings with clients. 'A lot of people make the mistake of thinking that you don't need business skills to run a charity,' he says. 'Well, you do. A lot of people who set up voluntary organisations have no business background, but I think it helps.'

One emerging partnership is with Nexus, which runs the Metro and has a chronic problem trying to control graffiti. It spends an estimated £1.5m, every year, removing unwanted artwork from its stations and trackside buildings. Bruce has met the director general of Nexus, Mike Parker, to discuss the potential for joint projects and is optimistic that these will be pursued once Eye of the Fly has settled into its new base.

'Having a place to work is what we've been waiting for,' he says. 'We will be able to deliver the courses and we will have a place where clients can come and see the skills that we have. It will make a big difference.'

More information

For further information, contact
Tor Bruce on 0775 106 9429.
Email: eyeofthefly@hotmail.com

Updated application guidance

The Foundation's current programmes will stay in place until the end of 2006 at least, but in the meantime the guidance to applicants has been updated. The changes are minor and the overall content of the programmes is unchanged.

The only big difference is that the Regeneration programme is now called Money and Jobs. The Foundation chose the new name to emphasise its focus on projects that help disadvantaged people and communities to increase their assets, income and economic activity. Funding for credit union development and for debt and welfare advice services will also now be dealt with under Money and Jobs, rather than the Basics programme. Basics now includes day-to-day, practical support for asylum seekers and refugees as a priority area.

The updated information is available on the Foundation's website, where you can also download the revised application guidance and forms.

Later in the year the Foundation will be launching its plans for consulting with applicants and with other organisations as part of a wider policy review to inform grant making from January 2007.

Staff changes

In March, programme manager **Carol Bell** joined Newcastle Gateshead Initiative as head of programme development for Culture10. Carol had

been with the Foundation since 2001 overseeing its investment in cultural organisations and activities.

Penny Vowles has returned to the Foundation from her secondment to Futurebuilders to oversee its work with the cultural sector. Penny's background is in the arts: she was a founder member of Prism Arts, the arts and disability agency in Cumbria.

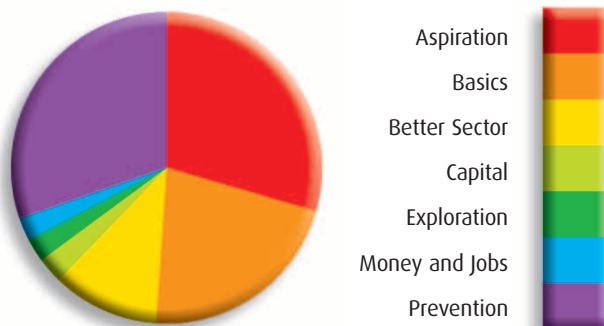
Cumbria domestic violence project

A consortium of organisations in Cumbria has been awarded £1.6 million over five years, under the Foundation's domestic violence initiative, to provide early intervention and support to victims, as well as a programme of work with perpetrators and a service for children affected by domestic abuse. The project will run in Eden and rural Carlisle and begin in summer 2005.

Impact Housing Association will manage the funding on behalf of the consortium - Cumbria Domestic Violence Strategic Management Board - which includes Cumbria Social Services and Probation Service, the Crown Prosecution Service and Cumbria Constabulary. Every victim of a domestic violence incident reported to the police will be contacted by the project within 24 hours. Staff will provide immediate and ongoing support, both practical and emotional.

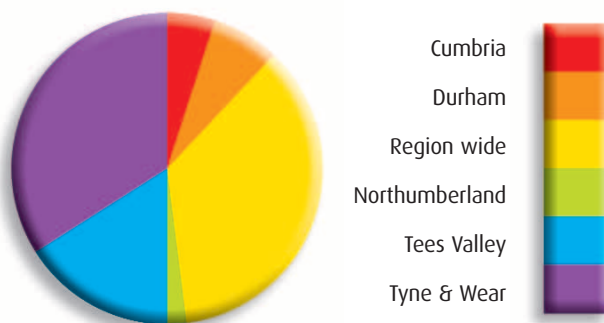
For more information contact Rob Williamson at Northern Rock Foundation on 0191 284 8412

Grants approved in the first quarter of 2005



Grants by programme Jan - March 2005

Grant programme	Amount approved (£)	No. of awards	% of amount approved
Aspiration	1,095,000	7	30%
Basics	800,968	16	22%
Better Sector	414,467	11	11%
Capital	100,000	1	3%
Exploration	89,950	3	2%
Money and Jobs	89,622	3	2%
Prevention	1,126,899	19	30%
Grand Total	3,717,906	60	100%



Grants by region Jan - March 2005

Region	Amount approved (£)	No. of awards	% of amount approved
Cumbria	174,513	5	5%
Durham	265,527	7	7%
Region wide	1,344,510	11	36%
Northumberland	73,000	2	2%
Tees Valley	593,676	10	16%
Tyne & Wear	1,266,680	25	34%
Grand Total	3,717,906	60	100%

julia darling



Julia Darling, the 2003 winner of the Northern Rock Foundation Writer's Award, died on 13 April 2005 at the age of 48. Julia was at the height of her writing career with a new book, *The Poetry Cure*, about to be published, a collection of plays for radio and television underway, and a play, *Manifesto for a New City*, touring the North East. *First Aid Kits for the Mind*, a collaboration with the artist Emma Holliday, was launched at the Biscuit Factory, in Newcastle, the day after she died.

Working with Julia was an honour and a delight. Her uplifting and inspiring work has already touched many lives and will continue to do so for years to come. We're proud that

our award played a part in supporting the work of such a creative and generous writer.

Julia chronicled her life and her creative endeavours on her website at www.juliadarling.co.uk. The very personal and witty 'blog' that she kept continues to be an inspiration for many people. The website is now also a home to tributes to her and to her work. Julia is survived by her partner Bev, her daughters Scarlet and Florrie, her parents, her brothers and her sister.

Fiona Ellis

sporting chance

Photograph © Simon Veit-Wilson



It was a dark, February evening in Consett and Christine Heppell's hands were cold - which was not surprising, since she had spent the previous two hours, outside, teaching a group of children to play tennis. Last year, Shotley and Benfieldside Tennis Club celebrated its 100th birthday. The same year, Heppell won the Sport England Female Community Coach of the Year Award.

'Tennis is not an expensive sport,' she explains. 'You don't have to pay an arm and a leg to learn how to play, and that means anyone can get involved.' Heppell and a team of volunteer coaches offer training at all levels, from complete beginners (anyone from the age of four upwards) to competition standard. The club, which has eight courts, is well used by local residents and by many more people from outside the immediate area. During the day, the local Youth Offending Team and schools bring groups of young people to play tennis and some of them come back in the evening, on their own.

Sport England (which is one of the distributors of National Lottery grants) is keen to see the development of facilities and training for people who might not otherwise get involved in sport. Two years ago, Shotley and Benfieldside Tennis Club got together with the local council, local businesses and the Primary Care Trust (which promotes healthy living, as well as treating people who are ill) and secured an Active England grant, to develop plans for a multi-activity centre at the tennis club. The ambition is to provide three more tennis courts, and facilities for other sports, including karate, cricket and five-a-side football. Although local residents supported the proposal, the planning application failed and the new facilities will now be built on another, larger site, not far away. Northern Rock Foundation is helping to fund the project under its Prevention programme.

We are sailing

Newbiggin by the Sea Sailing Club also applied to the Prevention programme for a contribution to the salary of a watersports development officer. The club was set up, by a group of sailing enthusiasts, in 1961. 'People living by the sea want to go in boats,' believes David Futer, the club's commodore (or chairman). 'In those days you could make your own boat and the club operated off the beach. We didn't have premises until much later.'

Many people ignore watersports because of the perceived cost, which is why the club is appointing a development officer. 'He or she will visit schools in Wansbeck, Blyth and Morpeth and talk about the different kinds of sport on offer,' Futer explains. 'We will offer

taster sessions, so that people can find out what they like. Canoeing first, then windsurfing and eventually, sailing.'

Hoops for health

Tyne and Wear Basketball Development Group (TWBDG) is involved in a different kind of development work. Through its Hoops for Health programme it is working with children aged nine to eleven in 120 schools in Tyne and Wear. The programme teaches children to play basketball and encourages them to lead a healthier lifestyle. Similar programmes in the United States have found that young people who play basketball on a regular basis are less likely to use drugs, cigarettes and alcohol and more likely to stay out of trouble.

Hoops for Health takes a roadshow (involving players from the Springfield Honda Newcastle Eagles Basketball Team) to every school. This is followed by between four and eight hours of coaching over several weeks. The school then sends as many teams as it likes to a local schools tournament and the winners go on to play at the Newcastle Arena, the Eagles' home ground. And as TWBDG's Deirdre Hayes explains, it doesn't stop there.

'It is really important that the young people can go on to something when the Hoops for Health project ends,' she says. 'We make sure there is a club they can go to, at a local sports centre usually, and that they know about it.'

Community fitness

In South Tyneside, a community fitness project has been training residents to become local activity coordinators. The organisation behind the project is STRIDE (South Tyneside Resource

for Initiating Development of the Economy). STRIDE was set up, ten years ago, to involve residents in making decisions about the future of their neighbourhoods. The idea of organising fitness classes won a lot of support.

The project runs sessions in church halls, community centres and, increasingly, in schools (for parents who have dropped off the children or are about to pick them up). The sessions are run by trained volunteers who were once, themselves, participants. The options include circuit training, Pilates, step choreography, exercise to music, aqua aerobics (when there is a swimming pool available) and even walking.

'We raised funds to provide training,' explains Nicholas Roberts at STRIDE 'and a lot of people qualified as instructors. More than a dozen of them have now found paid jobs and that's great, but it means they are not available to run sessions for us anymore.' The solution was to apply to the Foundation for a grant to employ a fitness worker.

'A lot of the people we had trained applied for the job and we appointed one of them - Chelsey Sweet.' The funding for qualifications has now run out but that has not stopped Roberts and Sweet from coming up with new ideas. 'The Primary Care Trusts in South Tyneside are employing lifestyle advisers now,' says Roberts 'and we will be working with them. We are also hoping to start a fitness course for disabled people.'

The Foundation will continue to support imaginative, well planned activities of this kind. 'In our region people's health is amongst the poorest in the UK,' says Prevention programme manager, Sue Vaughan. 'It makes sense to back projects that prevent health problems occurring or worsening, which is why we're interested in activities that promote a healthy, active lifestyle, particularly those that enable people from disadvantaged areas to get involved.'

More information

Christine Heppell
Shotley and Benfieldside Tennis Club
Tel: 01207 505226

David Futer
Newbiggin by the Sea Sailing Club
Tel: 01670 815297

Deirdre Hayes
Tyne and Wear Basketball
Development Group
Tel: 0191 245 3881
email: Deirdre.hayes@blueyonder.co.uk

Nicholas Roberts and Chelsey Sweet
STRIDE
Tel: 0191 455 6680
email: nick@stridenetwork.co.uk

writer's award

Gillian Allnutt is the 2005 winner of the Northern Rock Foundation Writer's Award.

Most prizes for writers are for a particular book and are given after the book has been published. This prize is different. It is for creative writers, of any kind, living in the North East or Cumbria and who have published two or more books. The winner receives £20,000 a year for three years to enable them to spend time writing.

Gillian Allnutt was born in London but spent a large part of her childhood in the North East. She worked as a teacher and writer, before returning to the North East, in 1988, where she teaches creative writing in adult education and works as a writer in schools. From 2001 - 2003 she had a fellowship from the Royal Literary Fund to work at the universities of Leeds and Newcastle.



Gillian Allnutt receives her award from Northern Rock Foundation chairman Leo Finn

Winning the Writer's Award means that Allnutt can stop teaching for a while and concentrate on her writing. 'There are one or two practical things I'll be looking at - like a new roof and a new computer - but really I'll be using the money just to live on,' she says.

Fiona Ellis, director of Northern Rock Foundation, chaired the judging panel.

'Gillian is one of the most original poets writing in the UK today,' she told Rock Reports, 'and if this award helps her in any way to concentrate on her writing, then the world of literature will be a far richer place.'

More information about the Writer's Award can be found at www.nr-foundationwriters.com

grant programmes and initiatives

About us

Northern Rock Foundation is an independent, grant-making organisation. Our primary objective is to tackle disadvantage and improve quality of life in our area. We support causes in Cumbria, Northumberland, Tyne and Wear, County Durham and the Tees Valley.

We were formed in 1997, when Northern Rock Building Society converted to a plc, and receive, by covenant, 5% of Northern Rock plc's pre-tax profits each year. The Foundation is fully independent of the plc and our own board of trustees determines our policies.

Who will we support?

To apply you should be a properly constituted organisation. You do not have to be a registered charity, but the purpose for which you are applying must be charitable. Proposals must fit within one of our programmes.



Northern Rock Foundation is a registered charity.
Registered number: 1063906

- **Prevention**
Preventing local and regional social decline - actions that stop social problems from developing or worsening, focusing on one or more of our priority issues.
- **Money and Jobs**
Helping disadvantaged people and communities to increase their assets, income and economic activity.
- **Basics**
Basic day-to-day services, over and above what statutory authorities offer, that provide people in our priority groups with more of the help they need.
- **Exploration**
Exploration and experiment - practical research, trying out, thinking, finding new ideas or ways to address disadvantage.
- **Better Sector**
A better, stronger voluntary sector - making the sector more capable of helping itself and others, articulating its needs and fighting its corner.
- **Aspiration**
Assistance to arts, environmental, heritage and sporting charities that raise the profile of our area and make it a better place in which to live and enjoy life.

Culture capital scheme

We also provide support for significant, ambitious and high quality proposals for new or refurbished buildings for arts, environmental, heritage or sports organisations. Contact us for more details.

Loans

We can offer loans for capital expenditure, bridging funds, working capital or to pay for regular commitments. Loans are not part of our main grant programmes and have separate application criteria. Contact us for more details.

How to apply

First read our detailed application guidance. All the information is on our website www.nr-foundation.org.uk

You can also get an application pack by ringing us on 0191 284 8412, or by emailing us at generaloffice@nr-foundation.org.uk.

Once you've looked at the guidance and decided which programme your proposal fits under, if you have any questions you can ring us to speak to one of our programme managers.

The Old Chapel, Woodbine Road, Gosforth, Newcastle upon Tyne NE3 1DD Tel: **0191 284 8412** Fax: **0191 284 8413** Minicom: **0191 284 5411**
E-mail: generaloffice@nr-foundation.org.uk Web: www.nr-foundation.org.uk