



Better for everyone

Mid Durham
Area Action Partnership
Annual Report

2020/21

Introduction



Councillor Brian Stephens

The past twelve months have challenged us all in many ways. The Covid pandemic has changed how the council and Area Action Partnerships (AAPs) have had to work as many communities and local residents have struggled because of the restrictions that we have all had to follow.

If there are positives we can take from this terrible situation it is that 'community' is alive and well in County Durham. Thousands of people have stepped forward and have taken action to ensure the most isolated and vulnerable have been looked after. The people of County Durham need to be applauded for their efforts.

Many of those organisations that have been helping out have been supported by the AAPs who have provided funding to numerous groups enabling them to do their vital work. Some of this funding has come directly through the AAPs whilst other resources have been allocated from the County Councillors Neighbourhood Budgets. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the AAP teams for their help and support in ensuring that our Neighbourhood Budgets have been making a real difference in local communities.

The next year will be no less challenging but I am delighted to say that the AAPs are being given extra resources to help communities recover from the pandemic. There is also new funding to support the County Council's Towns and Villages Programme and the AAPs will be playing a key role in ensuring this funding helps to improve communities across County Durham.

Finally I would like to thank all those involved with AAPs including the members of the public who regularly support their work. I am very proud to have been involved with the AAPs over the past twelve years and know that they will keep making a difference in County Durham.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "B Stephens". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Councillor Brian Stephens, Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhoods and Local Partnerships



Mid Durham Area Action Partnership 2020/21 Key Information

FUNDING



£121,628.39

of AAP funding allocated to 14 projects

£56,464.09

of AAP funding allocated to 17 Covid Emergency Projects

£338,938.47

of County Councillor Neighbourhood Budget funding allocated to 65 local projects

COMMUNITY SUPPORT



17

local community groups receiving financial support from our AAP to deliver Covid emergency response programmes for local people

1,080

local people as AAP Forum members



COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

49,719

times the community engaged through our social media

46

e-bulletins to over 1,000 local people, 1 each week, informing communities of local activity, support and information over the crisis period



COMMUNICATION

Mid Durham Area Action Partnership

Established in 2009 Mid Durham AAP brings together local people and partners to take action on local issues. The area ranges from Castleside at our most Northern point, to Langley Moor in the South encompassing 20 large and small villages and many more settlements in between. This makes up our diverse urban, semi-rural and rural AAP area in Mid County Durham.

Over the last year the key focus has obviously been on 'Covid Emergency Response' and more lately on 'Covid Recovery'. Covid Recovery will be a continuing theme moving into this year ahead. Over £178,000 of direct AAP funding has been allocated to local organisations and projects throughout this year of the pandemic, to respond to the crisis and help people and local organisations recover.

Welcome from the Chair

Janet Box (public representative)

As I said this time last year in May 2020 'The AAP has started to play a primary role in supporting community initiatives reacting to emergency needs of those most vulnerable or struggling financially, which will no doubt carry on into the financial/operational year of 2020/21, where this may well prove a very different annual report. I look forward to seeing how the AAP can help impact positively on our communities in 2020 in these unprecedented and most challenging of times.'

Well I was not wrong! in that we have had to face major challenges to our way of life in our communities alongside major heartache for some facing the full impact of the pandemic. I am sure you will agree when appreciating this annual report that we will see how the AAP has been able to rise to the challenges and impact positively on peoples lives over this last year.

I retained the chair position just to help maintain the 'status quo' for the AAP and our Board with us being unsure about how we were to approach this year initially. As chair of the Mid-Durham Area Action Partnership I am very happy to be associated with the many successes of this AAP throughout the year, particularly where we have responded to the pandemic in the first emergency period. People have found themselves in the most desperate situations in need of community support to help them access food, health services and other aspects of our lives we often take for granted.

Thank you to the officers of this AAP who have worked tirelessly (from their kitchen tables!) to support the local community and elected members to make a real difference to local lives and obtain support to assist with all the challenges the Covid 19 pandemic was to throw at us.

I am sure we are all looking forward to the year ahead now slowly getting back to normality. The Mid Durham AAP are committed to supporting the wellbeing of its communities and with an increased fund this coming year, to help with villages improvements, alongside extra funding to address issues for those living in poverty. We will continue to pull together as we have this last year and build on all the positive collective working to help aid our recovery as a community.



Our People

Anyone who lives, works, studies or volunteers in the area can get involved with the Area Action Partnership. We currently have 1,080 people who are part of our wider Forum receiving regular updates and E-bulletins and are invited to get involved in the work of the AAP. Many of our members also attended a unique on-line 'Better for Everyone' event in November to help recognise and celebrate the local community groups who responded to community challenges at the height of the crisis.

Our Board is the decision-making body of the AAP. It is made up of local people (public reps), elected councillors and representatives from partner organisations. Our Board members in 2020/21 are:

CLlr David Bell
CLlr Jude Considine (Vice Chair)
CLlr Jean Chaplow
CLlr John Turnbull
CLlr Paul Taylor
CLlr Bev Coult
CLlr Anne Bonner (Parish Council Rep)
Janet Box (Public Representative and Chair)
Lesley Baxter (Public Representative)
Peter Aitkin (Public Representative)
Ellen Wilson (Public Representative)
Mary Tribe (Public Representative)
Peter Ray (Public Representative)
Alison Gray (Public Representative)
Paul Moralee (Karbon homes)
Peter Mackie (NE First Credit Union)
Stephen Luke (Fire and Rescue Service)
Mark Mallatratt/Stephen Clegg (Durham Constabulary)
Juliet Carling (North Durham CCG and Vice Chair)
Amanda Healy/Helen Lynch (Durham County Council)
Tina McClellan (Voluntary and Community Sector)

Co-opted: Rachel Edmunds (Believe housing), Sophie Marston (Young Person)

Thanks go to CLlr Ossie Johnson (as 'stand in' councillor). We'd also like to thank former Board members James Gray (Police rep) and Lee Brown (Fire Service rep) who stepped down from the Board this year.

2020/21 Funding Allocation

Area Budget (which includes Social Isolation funding, Welfare Reform funding and Young Peoples fund)
£10,000 – Brandon Sports Club
£6,383 – Brandon Table Tennis Club
£7,500 – Burnhope Community Association
£5,100 – Castleside Village Hall
£15,000 – CDC Enterprise Agency
£6,040 – Culture Healing Communities
£5,818 – DH7 Community Events
£15,000 – Durham Christian Partnership
£6,500 - Hamsteels Community Centre
£16,399 - Handcrafted
£9,910 - Singing Elf
£5,000 - Step to the Occasion
£6,000 – St Michaels PTA
£6,942.04 – Willowburn Hospice
Covid-19 Emergency Funding
£4,000 - COVID19 Community Spirit Team, Esh Parish Council
£5,000 - Willow Burn Hospice, Treasuring Lives
£1,500 - Hamsteels Community Centre
£1,000 - Supporting Parents of Vulnerable and at risk Children, Esh Winning Primary School
£500 - Food Parcels for the Needy, Brandon Primary School
£4,800 - Brandon Sports Club
£7,681.25 - Handcrafted COVID19 Relief Response
£6,880.56 - Handcrafted Support
£1,023.23 - COVID19 Food Provision, RefUse
£900 - Support to Lanchester Residents, Lanchester Partnership
£10,000 - Supporting Ushaw during COVID19
£6,129 - Esh Winning Football Club COVID Utility Funding
£2,589.05 - Esh Winning Cricket Club COVID19 Support
£1,557 - Croft View Halls COVID19 Financial Support
£589.50 - Satley Parish Hall Covid-19 Support
£1,314.50 - Hedleyhope Village Hall
£1,000 Food Parcels for the Needy, Brandon Primary School

Neighbourhood Budget (not including small grant)
£2,000 - Ushaw College Summer Activities
£1,850.27 - Bollards Front Street Witton Gilbert
£15,756 - Esh Schools 20mph Zones
£1,000 - 1st Langley Park All Saints Rainbows, Brownies and Guides
£1,000 - Witton Gilbert Primary School Hand Washing Troughs
£1,000 - Witton Gilbert Village Play Group
£10,000 - Compulsory Purchase Order of Sacriston Lane Allotments
£1,193 - Christmas 2020 OAP Lunch / Children's Selection Boxes
£1,000 - Daily Mile Track at Esh St Michael's
£19,658 - Witton Gilbert 20mph Zone
£25,796 - Langley Park 20mph Zone
£1,000 - Witton Gilbert Football Club
£1,000 - Technology Update Langley Park Primary
£5,213.48 - Witton Gilbert Covid Outdoor Leisure Improvements DCTY Project
£2,378.80 - Defibrillator Quebec Village Hall
£1,000 - Witton Gilbert Village Hall Equipment
£1,818.88 - Salt Bins Langley Park
£128.66 - St Cuthbert's Hospice
£750 - Supporting Parents of Vulnerable and at risk Children, Esh Winning Primary School
£1,796.96 - New Brancepeth Christmas Tree
£3,071.56 - Rear of Jubilee Close New Brancepeth Parking Area
£1,575 - New Brancepeth Village Hall Storage
£5,000 - Additional Day of Care for Older People DACC
£1,980 - New Brancepeth Primary School Tablets
£5,456.87 - New Brancepeth Improvements
£21,291.14 - Ushaw Moor Cricket Club Fencing
£2,680 - Waterhouses Community Woodlands
£2,124.44 - Railway Path Benches
£3,000 - Wheelchair Adapted Vehicle
£5,262 - Esh Winning FC Roof, Glass Washer and Tables
£500 - Food Parcels for the Needy, Brandon Primary School NBCV19

£1,675.92 - Bio-Blaster Brandon Primary School
£1,830 - Coaches Courses for Brandon United Youth FC
£30,000 - Brandon Sports Clubhouse and Carpark Extension
£10,236.97 - Meadowfield Christmas Tree 2021
£3,270 - Brandon Carrside Running Costs
£4,600 - St Andrew's Boiler
£9,874.75 - Heart of Brandon
£1,276 - Spiking Addison Park
£21,624 - VAS Brandon
£3,049.55 - Outdoor Social Area Brandon FC
£5,000 - The Lanchester Partnership and Churches Together COVID19 Support Group NBCV19
£5,000 - Willowburn Hospice Treasuring Lives
£1,000 - All Saints School iPads
£2,000 - Lanchester EP Tablets
£1,000 - All Saints Parish Centre Kitchen Upgrade
£3,500 - Replacement Gas Boiler in Castleside Village Hall
£10,812 - Burnhope Vehicle Activated Sign
£11,905.22 - Lanchester and Maiden Law Fencing
£2,000 - Caring for Co Durham Children with Cancer
£8,000 - Manor Grange Play Area
£10,000 - Disabled Anglers Platform
£1,000 - Off Grid Solar System
£3,000 - New Roof at Croft Hall
£7,500 - Lanchester Community Centre Heating System
£7,500 - Pride of Place – Durham Beaurepaire DCTY Project
£1,100 - Dropped Kerbs Skippers Meadows
£2,201.76 - Ushaw Moor Bus Shelter
£2,000 - Outdoor Classroom Silvertree Primary
£1,980 - Wild Outdoors DCTY Project
£2,340 - Elderly Support Worker DCTY Project
£4,211.24 - Bearpark Colliery History Project DCTY Project

Neighbourhood Budget is an allocation of £19,400 that each County Councillor gets each year to spend on Community Projects. The process is supported by the AAP team: Derek Snaith (AAP Coordinator), Helen Pinkney (Community Development/Project Officer), Lynn Cummings (Project Support Officer)

The projects listed above have been supported by County Councillors: David Bell, Jean Chaplow, Jude Considine, Bev Coult, Ossie Johnson, Arnie Simpson, Paul Taylor, John Turnbull, Marion Wilson.

For further information on what projects individual Councillors have supported contact your local AAP.

The Difference We Have Made



Esh Winning Primary School Supporting Vulnerable Families

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, many of our vulnerable and at-risk families were left with little or no income. Therefore, we decided to help out in any way we could, and we thought the best way to do this would be through a weekly food bag. The contents in the food bag were inspired by pre-packed boxes that food banks use for their clients. Each of our bags contained enough food for approximately three to four days. Two volunteers went shopping for the food throughout the week, packed the food into bags then delivered it directly to the households.

The outcome was many very grateful parents and families who were struggling to make ends meet due to the pandemic. Many parents are in low-income jobs and with problems in the Universal Credit and furlough systems, they were left with little to no money. We were told by many parents how helpful our food bags were. We also had family's that asked to stop receiving our food bags as they had started to receive income and no longer needed our help and wanted it to go to family's that still needed the additional support which we identified. We would like to say a huge thank you to the AAP for all their help and financial support. It has truly made a substantial difference to our parents and local community through the worst of the pandemic.



Willow Burn Hospice Alternative Therapy

Employing a Complementary Therapist two days per week at Willow Burn Hospice for our day service clients and in-patients so that we can deliver therapies to enhance and develop the treatment experience for patients. National research by Kings College London found that good pain and symptom control is one of the issues that is most important to patients with an untreatable palliative diagnosis, and this is what we aim to achieve.

It is well documented by health research organisations (e.g. Mind, Cancer Research UK, Macmillan, Marie Curie etc) that complementary therapies are beneficial in helping with depression, anxiety and stress, all conditions which are associated with living with a life limiting illness. It is also reported by patients, that following complementary therapy, they have seen the intensity of physical symptoms reduced. We don't currently provide these services at Willow Burn routinely, however have a volunteer reiki therapist, and the patients' feedback shows great positivity for this service. Unfortunately, as this is provided by a volunteer this is an intermittent addition to our care and we can't rely on this, which is why we would like to employ a therapist.

As well as meeting a need for patients, we have identified a gap in our current nurses and carers' skills. Training for the staff from a complementary therapist would develop their skills and ensure the hospice always has a level of ability to deliver some kind of complementary treatments.



Brandon Carrside Youth & Community Project Sunshine Project

Brandon Carrside Youth and Community Project were very grateful to receive a grant from Mid Durham AAP from their Holiday Activity with Healthy Food (HAHF) programme to provide a half term event in February to raise people's spirits during the Winter Lockdown.

The group wanted to spread cheer and sunshine to the dreary endless days and distributed free activity packs to 81 families reaching 150 children. The packs included materials to make sunshine decorations for windows and a live 'craft along demonstration' was included in an online event on Pancake Tuesday. Children were then encouraged to display their sunshine's in windows to raise people's spirits when they were out on daily exercise. This complimented the projects own display at their building in Brandon. Activity packs also included ingredients for pancake making and healthy fruit toppings.

Children also had the opportunity to engage in a live Toy Story show which included singing and dancing. The event was complimented by further funding from Brandon and Byshottles Parish Council so food parcels could be provided to families most in need and 50 were claimed across the Parish area.

Project Coordinator Rachael Avery also jointly won NE Youth Projects with Pride Youth Worker of the Year Award for leading her staff with commitment and dedication to the local community during the pandemic. The project also received the County Durham High Sheriffs Award for 2021.

The Difference We Have Made



Handcrafted Care Leaver Support

During the initial lockdown from March, we provided meals to those who were vulnerable or in need of help. One key referrer was Durham County Council Young People's Services who connected us with around 60 young people who had recently left the care system. To help see a robust recovery from the hardships of the Covid-19 pandemic we are planning to increase our outreach and expand programs of support for this group, including housing, training opportunities and support work. With this funding we will be able to build on the connection we had from our outreach projects during the lockdowns and help transition care leavers who are struggling with a wide range of issues to a healthier lifestyle.

A new program intentionally and specifically aimed at care leavers has been developed. We will engage with Care Leavers in the Mid-Durham area who may lack some basic living skills and confidence, we will run two weekly dedicated woodwork and cooking sessions at our Langley Moor hub. From the skills, training and self-esteem built by this project we aim to help care-leavers improve their mental health, enter employment and build self-sustaining lives.

A number of care leavers we have encountered are in desperate need of sustainable housing. Since the lockdown began in March 2020, we will have housed 6 care leavers in a stable living environment to break the patterns of a chaotic lifestyle.



Better for Everyone

Virtual Community Event

Although this was not a funded project it was an online community event highlighting the work that was undertaken by all the local community response groups in our Mid Durham AAP area who reacted to the pandemic and 'stepped up' to make a positive difference to people's lives across the crisis period.

Over 100 people interacted with the event highlighting local issues important to them and sending in their compliments and words of appreciation for all the projects that the AAP had funded to provide community support.

Those attending received an insight into the new County Vision as well as being able to send in local information/issues about the villages in which they lived in order to see how these may be addressed this coming year with increased AAP funding. Further engagement with communities will be undertaken in 2021/22 to see how investment can be targeted in villages to improve public spaces and address physical changes on high streets, amongst other potential projects.



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