



Mid Durham
Area Action
Partnership

Better for everyone

Mid Durham
Area Action Partnership

Annual Report

2023/24

Introduction



Councillor Elizabeth Scott

Portfolio Holder Statement

As the Cabinet portfolio holder for Economy and Partnerships I am proud to say that the Area Action Partnerships fall within my remit.

AAPs have been supporting work in local communities for 15 years now. Funding has helped to sustain and develop numerous local organisations right across County Durham. Nearly £30m has been allocated through Area Budget grants since AAPs were created back in 2009 supporting nearly 3000 different applications.

The 14 AAPs cover the whole of the county, each with effective boards of 21 people which are made partners, public, councillors and agencies. The Boards work on their specific priorities that reflect the needs of the county's varied localities. Over the last year they have again allocated nearly £2M which has supported over 190 local projects.

Fellow County Councillors and I are very grateful for the support we get from the AAPs in allocating our Neighbourhood Budget. This is funding every councillor gets to support good causes and projects in the areas we represent. Since 2009 over £37m has been allocated through nearly 8000 different applications. You can imagine the difference funding via the AAPs and Councillors has made to our towns, villages and city. This year councillors have supported well over 600 projects with over £2.4M of funding.

At a time when communities and families are having to deal with ongoing financial pressures AAPs have been able to help those organisations who are helping others. The strength of the voluntary and community sector in County Durham never fails to amaze me.

I do want to take this opportunity to thank everyone who gives up their time and volunteers with local organisations. Be that with sports clubs, management committees at community centres, environmental schemes

or those people who volunteer on AAP Boards. County Durham would be a poorer place without you. However volunteering has to be supported and it's a key area that AAPs help with in terms of supporting groups with volunteer management, training and support.

There is no doubt that community organisations are struggling through the ongoing cost of living crisis so if you have ever thought about volunteering now could be the time. Local organisations give so much to their communities and they do need our help.

Since 2009 AAPs have been a feature of our communities but change is ahead. Last year the council concluded a review of its community engagement activities which included the AAPs. The outcomes of this review are now being implemented and this is going to lead to enhancements in 2025 with AAPs being replaced by new 'Local Networks'. The Local Networks will continue to bring local people, councillors and organisations together building on the legacy of the AAPs with the aim of broadening the reach within communities and developing Local Network Plans setting out the longer-term aspirations for our many towns and villages. Over the coming months we will keep people updated as we develop Local Network structures.

Prior to the launch of Local Networks in 2025, AAPs will continue to deliver over the next year which will only be possible with the hard work of all involved. So a big thank you from me to fellow councillors, AAP Board members, partner organisations, members of the public and the AAP staff. I look forward to continuing to work with you all over the next 12 months.

Councillor Elizabeth Scott,

Cabinet portfolio holder for Economy and Partnerships.

Mid Durham Area Action Partnership 2023/24 Key Information



FUNDING

£128,472

of AAP funding allocated to 16 local projects

£132,825

of County Councillor Neighbourhood Budget funding allocated to 28 local projects

£21,339

of County Councillor Small Grant funding allocated to 47 local projects

£82,981

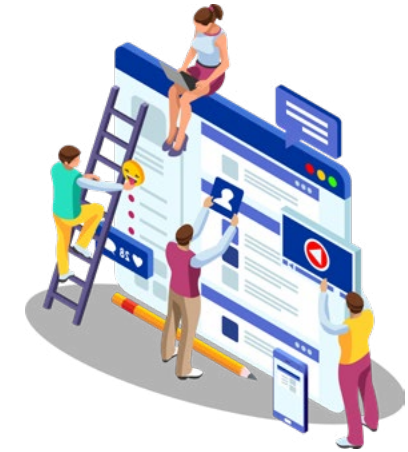
of AAP Town and Village funding allocated to develop capital projects in local villages

COMMUNITY SUPPORT

45 local community programmes delivered with just under £65,000 of AAP funds to provide Free Fun and Food activities over school holiday and half term periods with a focus on children receiving Free School Meals to help address 'holiday hunger'.

12 villages supported with funding to undertake Kings coronation events and activities.

20 local groups supported with AAP small grants.



COMMUNICATION

49,000 Times the community engaged through our social media.

Fortnightly E-bulletins to over

1,110 local people, informing communities of local activity, support and information.

Board Bullets developed to ensure the AAP Board have an instant summary of the Board meetings to share with communities.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Over **1,110** local people are AAP Forum members.



AAP Talks undertaken locally to inform communities of the forthcoming changes to the AAP.

Bi-monthly AAP Task Group and Board meetings undertaken in local community venues.

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 our focus has been on Community Recovery and also Town & Village Improvement. Over £211,000 (combined Area and Town and Village funding) has been allocated to local organisations and projects throughout this year, to aid our community recovery and help people and local organisations deliver much needed community initiatives.

Welcome from the Chair

Paul Moralee (partner representative)

This has been another busy year for the Area Action Partnership (AAP) working with our communities whilst also having been reviewed as a service within the council, ahead of a year of transition.

As chair of the Mid-Durham AAP, I am always amazed with the work it undertakes with many successes throughout the year. The Town and Village funding we received (£210k) has all been allocated across our area towards many capital projects such as new play areas, that make a difference in many of our villages. It has also been inspiring to see the locally developed initiatives that have been developed through our Fun and Food programme and also our Community Recovery funding we have as an AAP.

We continue to recognise the key economic strains on our communities and where the funding environment has changed for our local community projects this past year. This has meant a greater demand for projects in helping improve the community buildings and community projects in our area. Helping those community hubs develop community activities in support of local people's demand for activity and advice and information.

As said this year ahead will see the AAP review much of its current operations towards a full transformation in 2025 and beyond. At the end of the next financial year the AAP will become a 'Local Network' with a longer-term plan, changes to some of the functions, funding and other elements whilst also refreshing its involvement with local communities. Thank you to the officers of this AAP who have worked tirelessly 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. It has been a pleasure to work with Derek, Lynn and Joanne during the year and I would like to make a couple of special mentions to colleagues who have moved on to new roles. Helen Pinkney the CDPO in the team who has now been seconded to another AAP area in a more senior role and PJ Harding who was the Town and Village Officer CDPO in the AAP team helping develop the projects, who's temporary role ended this year. The Mid Durham AAP are committed to supporting the wellbeing of its communities.



Our People

Anyone who lives, works, studies or volunteers in the area can get involved with the Area Action Partnership. We currently have over 1,110 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. The two AAP task groups addressing Community Recovery and Town and Village Improvement have worked well to ensure the projects are developed and supported and make a difference on the ground.

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 2023/24 are:

Cllr Jean Chaplow

Cllr Bev Coult

Cllr Jonathan Elmer

Cllr Douglas Oliver

Cllr Dan Nicholls/Cllr Marion Wilson

Cllr Paul Taylor

Cllr John Turnbull (Parish Council Rep and Vice chair)

Janet Box (Public Representative)

Marion Wotherspoon (Public Representative)

Peter Ray (Public Representative and Vice Chair)

Edwin Simpson (Public Representative)

Robert Thompson (Public Representative)

Mary Tribe (Public Representative)

Joanne Wandless (Public Representative)

David Barker MBE/Rachel Todd (Voluntary and Community Sector Representative)

Vacant (North Durham CCG)

Gary Greenwood (Fire and Rescue Service)

Amanda Healy/Helen Bradley (Durham County Council)

Vacant (Business Representative)

Mark Mallatratt/Elizabeth Jermey (Durham Constabulary)

Paul Moralee (Housing Provider and Chair)

Co-opted: Anne Marie Parkin (Believe Housing)

We'd also like to thank former Board members Alison Gray (public rep), Paul Clitheroe (North Durham CCG rep) and Cllr Mike McGaun who stepped down from the Board this year.

2023/24 Funding Allocation

Area Budget
£5,000 Burnhope Primary School Early Years Outdoor Area
£5,500 Moving On Durham Housing Support
£9,500 East Hedleyhope Parish Council New Roof
£5,150 Browney Academy Fun Time Lunch Time
£5,106 Burnhope Community Centre Children and Young Peoples Activities
£6,160 Durham City Youth Project Langley Park Outreach Project
£8,795 Western Avenue Parking Improvements
£7,667 Lanchester Community Association Safe Space
£5,080 Derwentside Detached project Burnhope Young Peoples Drop In
£11,416 Ushaw Creating National Exhibition Space
£6,000 Brandon Carrside Youth Project Core Costs
£9,740 Browney Football Club Home Venue project
£6,077 Hamsteels Community Centre Sustainability Improvements
£22,214 Burnhope Cricket Club – 2 Lane Nets
£9,650 Castleside Village Hall Internal Access Improvements
£5,417 St Johns Hall Indoor and Outdoor Improvements
Towns and Villages
£25,000 Drovers Dell Play Area refurbishment
£22,214 New Brancepeth Public Realm Improvements
£35,767 Lanchester Solar Walk
Councillors Towns and Villages
£10,000 Drovers Dell Play Area Refurbishment
£5,427 Middle Grove, Brandon

Neighbourhood Budget (not including small grant)
£4,125 Langley Park Gateways, Durham County Council
£1,218 Unc Front Street Langley Park Bollards, Durham County Council
£9,000 Warm Building, Lanchester Community Centre
£7,263 TA1197 Burnhope Primary School, Durham County Council
£1,000 Drovers Dell Play Area Refurbishment
£18,132 Lanchester Hollinside Gateways and Ford Road VAS
£1,000 Contribution to Beyond Caring Performances
£4,740 Community Heritage Walks
£10,000 Brandon Sports Club Extension Project
£11,263 Brandon Village Hall Improvements
£1,405 Esh Hillside Salt bin
£600 Children in Care packages
£1,546 Browney court, additional lighting
£600 Durham Pride UK
£1,712 New Brancepeth Christmas tree
£12,939 Broom lane top up
£12,000 Waterhouses Village Hall
£2,250 Ushaw Moor Cricket club – equipment and hoodies
£500 Children and young people's activities
£1,250 TA1197 Burnhope Primary School
£2,000 Muggleswick Church camping project
£1,600 Orchard solar
£5,097 Langley Moor Christmas tree
£1,712 Meadowfield Christmas tree
£2,750 Middle Grove, Brandon
£1,554 Plinth repairs
£12,500 Maiden Law with vehicle activated signs
£3,069 Equipment and training

Neighbourhood Budget Small Grant
£400 Plastic Poppy Project
£50 Jubilee Tree Planting
£700 Castleside Parish Wood – Enhance current stiles to make them dog friendly
£999 Lanchester and District Flower Club 2023
£400 Klubs for Kids
£300 Burnhope Breakfast Club
£400 Burnhope Wheel Magazine
£369 Consett Steelworks Site Photograph Protective Cover
£445 Jubilee Event Addison Park
£600 Year 6 Team Building Day
£500 Dunelm Litter Pickers – Fairy Garden
£200 Browney Defibrillator
£500 Platinum Jubilee Celebrations Meadowfield and Langley Moor Over 60s
£750 Extension Drawings
£700 Brass Band for Miners Gala
£300 St Andrew's Defibrillator
£450 Easter holiday activities
£400 Christmas Community bus trip to York
£300 TRACC Christmas festivities in Cornsay Colliery
£200 Christmas gifts and party
£360 Cornsay Colliery tubs
£200 Langley Park FC field hire
£200 Satley Craft group
£350 Esh WI 50th celebration
£50 Remembrance parade
£700 Autumn Harvest festival
£400 New Brancepeth Christmas party
£500 Waterhouses Speed Survey
£300 Crockery, New Brancepeth Residents
£600 Replacement defibrillator storage
£784 Waterhouses cemetery signage
£144 Sensory sessions for autism group
£300 Christmas Hampers
£999 Purchase of a notice board

2023/24 Funding Allocation

Neighbourhood Budget Small Grant

- £999 Table tennis coaching
- £724 Outdoor activities
- £200 Year 6 leavers
- £700 DH7 army
- £240 Browney Banner
- £800 Brandon Community reassurance
- £326 Meadowfield skate park
- £400 Messy church holiday club
- £500 Brandon banner
- £212 Summer event – opening of new play equipment
- £400 Community Christmas parties
- £188 Community singers

Coronation fund

- £100 Coronation fund
- £100 Coronation Ceilidh
- £100 Esh Village Coronation celebrations
- £300 School Garden
- £600 Coronation planting
- £100 Together families
- £100 Kings Coronation celebration
- £100 Kings Coronation Garden party
- £300 Meadowfield celebrates the Coronation
- £150 Browney big lunch
- £150 Coronation celebration
- £600 Tree and border work to commemorate Coronation

Neighbourhood budget is an allocation of £19,400 that each County Councillor receives 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) and Lynn Cummings (Project Support Officer). Joanne Ashworth just joined the team at the end of the year in place of Helen Pinkney who is now seconded to Chester-le-Street AAP team for 2024/25.

The projects listed above have been supported by County Councillors Jean Chaplow, Bev Coult, Jonathan Elmer, Mike McGaun, Dan Nicholls, Douglas Oliver, Arnie Simpson, Paul Taylor, Marion Wilson.

For further information on the projects the councillors have supported, contact the AAP team.



Forget me notes choir



Burnhope play area design



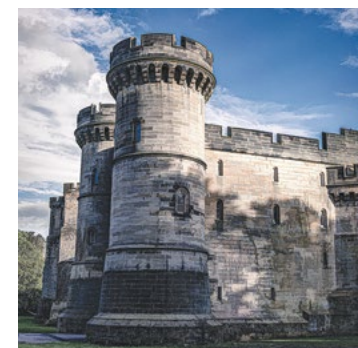
Kids Club



Ushaw



Lanchester war memorial



Brancepeth Castle

The Difference We Have Made



Durham Wildlife Trust Community and Church Grounds project

The Community and Wildlife Parish Grounds Project was delivered in partnership between Durham Wildlife Trust and volunteers from John Boste Green team. This project has engaged and inspired local people and encouraged them to get involved in improving the grounds of three churches for wildlife and creating vibrant places used by local people. St Michaels in Esh Laude which includes Esh Village, Quebec and Langley Park. St Josephs in Ushaw Moor. Our Lady Queen of Martyrs in Esh Winning which includes Cornsay Colliery and Waterhouses. Each church has natural wildlife-rich grounds with areas of grassland, mature trees and open space. They are already wonderful spaces to relax, reflect, socialise, and enjoy nature. Each one had the potential to become richer in wildlife with involvement from a wide cross section of the community, to create valuable green havens for everyone to enjoy.

Using the grant, employed a part-time Community and Wildlife Officer (CWO) to co-ordinate the project working with existing Green Team volunteers at each church and helping them to reach out to the wider community.

The project has achieved many outcomes, growing the community as well as wildlife: e.g. creating a wildflower meadow on an ex dumping ground site, transforming a woodland into a wildlife friendly woodland, a kingfisher project through restoring an old beck, working alongside home education children to carry out planting, developing a peace garden at St Michaels Church for the local community to reflect on those who have passed.



Fun and Food

Fun and Food is a funding programme to help address 'holiday hunger' which is a period of time primarily in school holiday periods, where regular free school meals are not provided and can then become a challenge for some parents to provide regular meals for their children. The provision is primarily targeted at families in receipt of benefit related free school meals.

The Area Action Partnership support the development of holiday programmes aimed at young people and children, in communities, where 'free' fun activity takes place alongside a healthy meal and food provision. Between February 2023 and February 2024 forty-five local projects were delivered across our communities giving access to activity and health food for over 600 children. In addition to the fun and food programme, the AAP funded its own summer programme across 6 villages providing multi-sports and outdoor learning and a further 350 children participated.

The children engaged in a whole variety of activity ranging from sports, outdoor education and learning about growing food as well as activities engaging children in fun art workshops, science, technology, and engineering also the environment and learning about animals. Some families were sent home food 'packs' with the children to create their own healthy meals as a family.



Cornsay Parish Council Hamsteels Community Centre Sustainability Improvements

In July 2021 Hamsteels Community Centre had an energy efficiency audit carried out through Durham County Council's Business Energy Efficiency Project to identify areas for improvements. This highlighted where savings could be made quickly and easily including monitoring energy use, using curtains and blinds to regulate light and temperature, improved heating and hot water control and marking switches to make it clear what they were for. These were all implemented.

However with the increases in energy costs the centre was keen to reduce costs and improve energy efficiency and contribute more towards carbon reduction, so identified the need for solar panels and replacing lighting with LED fittings.

As a key community facility in Esh Winning the AAP helped with the majority of funding to have the panels installed and the lighting in the main hall replaced, which has made a major difference and has helped sustain the organisation which benefits the local community. Solar panels will reduce the running costs of the centre, while also improving sustainability. The new panels and lighting have helped make a saving of around 50% on electricity costs.

The centre has been a 'hub' offering local people access to a welcome (warm) space for those unable to afford the heat in their own homes over the winter period. The savings made through the panels and the lighting has helped ensure this support can be provided.

The Difference We Have Made



YouthZ Learning a New Way

A new youth group at St John's Hall, Meadowfield on Sunday mornings has been set up to meet the needs of local young people who may not have access to other youth provision. The focus of the group was to promote healthy relationships in a proactive way, to reduce the chance of the young people being the victims of domestic abuse (or indeed being the perpetrator), to promote good mental health, build self-esteem, and provide social opportunities to reduce isolation.

A number of methods and activities have been undertaken using arts and crafts, by connecting with nature, providing sensory exploration sessions, and by being active alongside collaborations with other youth provision.

In conjunction with Eric Knows CIC we delivered an emotional awareness positivity course. Being emotionally aware helps young people feel more confident in themselves, and able to help young people to feel more confident by looking at things such as affirmations, challenging body image issues, and by helping them find their voice.

This is a creative and stimulating environment for the young people, but with them also being able to access stress-relieving and relaxation strategies to help them lead happy and fulfilling lives.

A young person said –

“ I love going to the group, and I am so glad it was made ”

Front cover image: Burnhope Wheel



Burnhope Community Centre Children and Young Peoples Activities

Part of the funding awarded for this project was for the Activities Coordinator (children and young people's) at the centre who coordinates activities for local groups for children. The project through the coordinator, dedicated volunteers and the help of parent's deliver a number of activities:

- Burnhope Bairns – group for babies, toddlers and preschoolers and their parents/carers. This runs for two mornings a week with over 40 children attending across the sessions and up to 30 parents and carers, proving a great success and meeting a need for young parents in particular with new babies.
- Kids Klub – aimed at primary school aged children with 30 members attending each week, proving so popular the sessions are full, with a waiting list. Supporting local families to have access to children's sessions which provide recreational and leisure activities.
- School holiday activities – which provides opportunity for local children and young people to take part in structured activities in the holiday periods when not at school. This also contributes to helping ensure children have access to a healthy meal, particularly targeting families in receipt of benefits related free school meals.



The funding for the Activities Coordinator also contributes towards them being able to coordinate the volunteers and staff team, ensure safeguarding, publicising, liaising with parents and carers, organising trips and coordinating planning meetings and ultimately delivery of the overall children and young people's programme.

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