



Better for everyone

3 Towns 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.

3 Towns Partnership 2023/24 Key Information



FUNDING

£135,900

Area Budget funding allocated to local projects

£147,300

Towns and Villages funding

£108,193

Neighbourhood Budget funding allocated

£44,527

Fun and Food funding

£617,808.55

Match funding



COMMUNICATION

16 E-Bulletins sent out to our electronic forum members, keeping the community in touch with essential messaging

92,214

engagements with the community through social media



COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

19 Voluntary and Community groups supported

1,500 people accessing new/improved community buildings and facilities

84 volunteers involved in project delivery

100 children and young people benefitting from schemes that aim to support them in achieving and maintaining optimum mental health and wellbeing

230 adults involved in initiatives aimed at improving mental health and wellbeing

919 children benefitting from activities and food support during the school holidays

COMMUNITY SUPPORT

89 Projects supported including:

7 Area Budget projects

20 Neighbourhood Budget projects

27 Neighbourhood Budget Small Grant projects

5 Neighbourhood Budget Small Grants Coronation Fund projects

30 Fun and Food Projects



3 Towns Partnership

3 Towns Partnership brings together local people and partners to take action on local issues. The partnership area includes 3 Towns and 20 villages and settlements. Over the last year, the key focus has been on Community Recovery. Over £135,000 from Area Budget has been allocated to local organisations to help them take action on local issues. The AAP has also been involved in consulting local people on issues such as Policing, Housing and Homelessness plans, Durham County Council Budget consultations, and the Fire Service's Community Risk Management Plan.

Welcome from the Chair

Councillor Richard Manchester



It is once again my pleasure to introduce the Annual Report of the 3 Towns Partnership. Our communities continue to be affected by the cost-of-living crisis, increasing the burden on our fantastic community organisations. This, combined with rising inflation, has guided much of our work with demand for funding increasing.

We have started to host networking events for our community groups which have been very well-attended. These forums are proving to be a great way of directing our future priorities. The towns and villages programme has also come to an end with all funding allocated, huge thanks are owed to Joanne Ashworth for all her efforts in working with the 3 Towns Partnership, community stakeholders and elected members.

It is fitting as well to thank two long-serving members of the board, Cllr Margaret Elgie from Willington Town Council and Inspector Ed Turner from Durham Constabulary who are both leaving us at the end of the year. And, as always, special thanks are reserved for the 3 Towns team: Sandy, Nicola, Susan and Kelly – who moved onto another role part way through the year.

Our People

Anyone who lives, works, studies or volunteers in the area can get involved with the Area Action Partnership. We currently have 1304 people who are part of our wider Forum who receive regular updates and who are invited to get involved in the work of the AAP.

Our Board is the decision-making body of the AAP. It is made up of local people, elected councillors, and representatives for partner organisations. Our current Board members are:

Jay Conlon
David Dixon
Chris Ebdon
Mary Hall (Vice Chair)
Dianne Mackay
Pauline Moger
Fiona Nicol

Cllr Mike Currah
Cllr Margaret Elgie (Greater Willington Town Council)
Cllr Olwyn Gunn
Cllr Patricia Jopling
Cllr Richard Manchester (Chair)
Cllr Anne Reed
Cllr Fraser Tinsley
Cllr Paul Stokes (Tow Law Town Council) Co-opted

Liz Bradley – Housing
Gordon Elliott – DCC (Vice Chair)
Jonathan Holmes - Fire
Jill Matthewson – CCG
Graham Tomaszko – Business
Insp Ed Turner / Sgt Grant Cockerill – Police
Helen Ward – VCS

We would also like to thank former public representatives Allan Coleman and Robbie Roddiss who stepped down from the Board this year.

2023/24 Funding Allocation

Area Budget
Hunwick Community Social & Environmental Group – All Things Social will provide monthly social activities sessions with food for older residents in the village.
Jack Drum Arts – Becoming Greener includes the delivery of 2 x regular weekly sessions providing young people with musical activities and help the organisation to reduce their carbon footprint.
Willington Cricket Club – Old Pavilion - will refurbish the Old Pavilion to support the club's development.
Howden le Wear Village Friends – Howden le Wear Village Friends project will provide a weekly drop-in session and monthly specials with entertainment and outings including the introduction of new specialist groups.
Friends Together – Friends Together 1 and 2 provides twice weekly social sessions for socially isolated older people.
Sunniside Community Association - Sunniside Community Allotment will create a community allotment that will complement existing work to tackle food poverty whilst having a positive impact on the environment.
Willington Open Door Church – Our Confident Community will continue to meet the needs of the community delivering food support, structured activities and training, access to computers and advice and support with benefits, budgeting and debt.
Towns and Villages
Durham County Council - Traffic and Speed Management Project will deliver a package of Traffic Management solutions including 40mph buffer zones, 20mph school zones, dropped kerbs, gateway treatments, and a police hardstanding
Durham County Council - 3 Towns AAP Play Area Improvements will refurbish a number of play areas across the 3 Towns AAP area including Willington Town Park, Tow Law, Glenholme Park and Oakenshaw.
Durham County Council - 3 Towns Bulb Planting entails a series of seasonal bulb planting activities planned by the Civic Pride Team with the help of Find and Fix crew involving local residents, groups and possibly local schools in the 3 Towns Area.

Neighbourhood Budget
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. The projects listed below have been supported by County Councillors; Mike Currah, Olwyn Gunn, Patricia Jopling, Richard Manchester, Anne Reed, Fraser Tinsley.
Main Grant
Nordostinos Stage 2 – Jack Drum Arts – OG / FT
Willington and Hunwick Heritage Trail App – Northern Heartlands - OG / FT
Autumnus Feast event – Greater Willington Town Council – OG / FT
3 Towns Play – Oakenshaw Play Area – Durham County Council- OG / FT
Microphones and Christmas Lights – Hunwick Community Social and Environment group- OG / FT
Tow Law Outdoor area – Tow Law Community Centre – RM
3 Towns Play – Tow Law Play Area –Durham County Council - RM
Salt Bins – Durham County Council – RM
Heritage 100 walks – Tow Law – Walk and Talk Trust - RM
Big BRASS Bash – Durham County Council – PJ, MC, AR
Replacement kitchen – Howden le Wear Village Hall association – PJ, MC
Crook Christmas Tree and Festive Lights – Durham County Council – PJ, MC, AR
Security for storage area / Outdoor Furniture and new shower – Crook Cricket Club – MC, AR
Crook Division Play Improvements - Durham County Council - AR
Samba Drums Equipment– Jack Drum Arts – AR
Hobbit Hut - Howden le Wear Primary School- AR
Crook Street Food Market - Baccanalia for Culture CIC - PJ, MC
Howden Le Wear Village Hall Flooring – Howden le Wear Village Hall association – PJ, MC
Entry into Care packs – Investing in Children – OG, AR, MC, PJ

Small Grants
T shirts for singing group – Hunwick Community Social and Environment group – OG, FT
Sensory Seat project - Hunwick Community Social and Environment group – OG, FT
Coach Hire – Greater Willington Town Council – OG, FT
Football Tournament – Willington Youth Football – OG, FT
Growing Healthy Allotment project – Harrogate and District NHS Foundation Trust- OG, FT
Pantomime - Greater Willington Town Council – OG, FT
Coach Hire – Crook and District Ramblers – OG, PJ, MC, AR
Social Group Trip – Stanley Crook Village Hall association – RM
Tow Law Car Park Signage – Durham County Council – RM
Defibrillator Pads and Storage – Sunniside Community Association – RM
Christmas Tree – Billy Row Residents Association- RM
Social Club Christmas lunch – Stanley Crook Village Hall Association – RM
Christmas Trip – Tow Law Millenium Primary School – RM
Road Signage – Sunniside Community Association – RM
Coronation Event – Fir Tree Residents Association- PJ
Christmas Lunch – St Catherine's Church Dementia Café – PJ, MC, AR
Christmas Lunch – Fir Tree Residents Association – PJ, MC
Christmas Lunch – Churches Together in Crook – PJ, MC
Christmas Gifts – Friends Together – PJ
Equipment – 3rd Crook Rainbows – MC
Hedge Trimming - High Jobs Hill Allotments MC, AR
Skip Hire – Church Hill Allotments – AR
Skip Hire – Foundry Fields Allotments – AR
Christmas Tree – RAF Club of Crook – AR
Warm Spaces – Rotary Club of Crook – AR
Blankets, Throws and Flasks – Howden le Wear Village Friends - AR

2023/24 Funding Allocation

Neighbourhood Budget Small Grants

Coronation Funding

Our Confident Community – Willington Open Door Church – OG

Coronation Tree - Howden-Le-Wear Local History Society - AR

Bulb planting October school holidays, school children, residents- Hunwick Community Social and Environment Group – FT

Coronation Celebration – Oakenshaw Community Association FT

Fir Tree Big Picnic – Fir Tree Residents Association- PJ MC

Councillors Towns and Villages Projects

Charity 4 U Shop Refurbishment – Charity 4 U – OG / FT

Willington Footpath Improvements – social activities sessions – OG / FT

3 Towns Play – Tow Law Play Area – Durham County Council - RM

Glenholme Site – Long Term Planning – Durham County Council – PJ, MC

Crook Division Play Improvements – Durham County Council - AR

Fun and Food

Easter

Our Confident Community - Willington Open Door Church

Carnival Club - Jack Drum Arts

Easter Fun and Food - Tow Law Community Association

May

ATOMS Half Term Challenge - Atoms Education CIC

Bunting workshop - Hunwick Community, Social & Environmental Group

May Half Term children's events - Crook Library

Summer

Going Green Arts and Craft Activities - Jack Drum Arts

Summer Fun 2023 - Greater Willington Town Council

Our Confident Community - Willington Open Door Church

Our Confident Community – Gala trip - Willington Open Door Church

ATOMS presents Tow Law's Got Talent - ATOMS CIC

Summer Family Fun - Tow Law Community Centre

Trip to Gala Theatre to see Alice in Wonderland- Tow Law Community Centre

Nature Explorers - OASES

Sunderland Summer Panto Trip- Sunnyside Community Association

October Half Term

Spooky Stories- Jack Drum Arts

Our Confident Community - Willington Open Door Church

October Half Term events - Crook Library

October Festival - Groundwork North East and Cumbria

Halloween 2023 - Greater Willington Town Council

Lantern Making Workshop- Hunwick Community Social Environment Group

Christmas

Winter Fun and Food - Tow Law Community Association

Our Confident Community - Willington Open Door Church

Environmental Elves - Durham Wildlife Trust

February Half Term

Crazy Creatures - Hunwick Community Social & Environment Group

Youth Residential & Monster Circus - Jack Drum Arts

Dragons, Myths and Magic Crafts - Crook Library

Our Confident Community - Willington Open Door Church

The Sound of Science- ATOMS CIC

3 Towns Youth Panel

The 3 Towns Youth Panel have continued throughout the year reviewing applications received for the Childrens and Young Peoples small grants pot that they manage. They have allocated funding to 6 projects this year totalling £2,997.00 with associated match investment of £5,028.88. The funding has been allocated to the following projects.

Hobbit Hut - Howden Le Wear Primary School

Tow Law Youth Group Graffiti Project - Stoke the Flame CIC

Forest School activities - Tow Law Millenium Primary School

Outdoor Reading - Willington Primary School

Training and Match Costs - Willington Blues Youth Football

Room Hire - Howden Le Wear Toddlers group



All Things Social



February network event



Willington cricket pavilion

The Difference We Have Made



Towns and Villages Funding Durham County Council Traffic and Speed Management Project

Traffic and speeding issues were raised as a priority concern through both the priority survey and the targeted consultation carried out as part of the Towns and Villages programme. In response to this, a package of Traffic Management solutions has been created – this will include 40mph buffer zones, 20mph school zones, dropped kerbs, gateway treatments, and a police hardstanding.

Towns and Villages Funding Durham County Council Three Towns AAP Recreation Improvements

The project will refurbish a number of recreation areas across the 3 towns – including a new MUGA in Willington, works to the safety surfacing and access to the play area on Willington Town Green, a replacement play area in Tow Law, outdoor gym facility in Crook, and replacement play area in Oakenshaw.

Area Budget Howden le Wear Village Friends Howden le Wear Village Friends

The project will continue to provide a weekly drop-in session for mainly older people in the Howden Le Wear area as well as a monthly special which could be a special themed lunch with entertainment or an outing. They also run spin off groups such as the connect group for the bereaved and a mens social group.

The Difference We Have Made



Fun and Food County Durham OASES - Nature Explorers project

The Nature Explorers project held a weekly session at 3 locations within the 3 Towns throughout the summer holidays. The fun and enriching sessions allowed children and their families to discover the natural world through outdoor games and activities, such as a minibeast hunt, den-building, tower challenge and nature crafts. Children and their families also received a healthy packed lunch and nutritional education at each session.

Area Budget Willington Open Door Church Our Confident Community

Our confident community will enable Willington Open Door Church to continue to offer a minimum of 3 days per week of drop in and structured activities that aim to improve the physical, mental, and emotional health of local residents. The project will fund activities, food, rent and staffing for the project.

3 Towns Partnership Events Fund

The funding was allocated from Area Budget in 2022/23 with funding open for bids during this financial year. 4 projects received funding towards their events – Jack Drum Arts for Crook Winter Light Parade, Greater Willington Town Council for Autumnus Mabon Feast, Natural High for the Pirates of the Curry Bean and Jack Drum Arts for Bop Fest 2024.


Contact Details

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