



Better for everyone

Mid Durham  
Area Action Partnership  
**Annual Report**

**2022/23**

# Introduction



Councillor Elizabeth Scott

## Portfolio Holder Statement

As the Cabinet portfolio holder for Economy and Partnerships I am happy to say that the overview of the Area Action Partnerships falls under my remit.

Over the last 13 years AAPs have helped local community organisations to thrive through practical support and funding. 2022/23 has been no different. The 14 AAPs across County Durham have helped to fund over 230 projects through their Area Budgets allocating £2.6m to these good causes. This is making a massive difference when like the rest of us, local organisations are being adversely impacted by the continued long term impacts of the Covid pandemic and the cost of living crisis.

County Durham is a diverse place, and each AAP is led and directed by local people, councillors, and partners. This means they can adapt to local circumstances whether they be in Wingate or Westgate, Castleside or Coxhoe. This local engagement means AAPs are firmly rooted in, and valued by their communities.

Throughout County Durham AAP funding has supported a wide variety of projects including, youth work, mental health support, environmental projects, activities for older people, sports clubs, children's play, village halls and community centres, parish councils, community safety initiatives and employment schemes, just to name a few.

The AAPs also support myself and my fellow councillors in allocating our annual Neighbourhood Budget. The 126 County Councillors have allocated over £2.2m to over 820 local projects in County Durham over the past year, again supporting a wide range of local schemes.

As with any service, it is always good practice to consider if any improvements can be made. Having remained largely unchanged for the last 14 years, the need for an independent view as to how the service might be enhanced led to the recently completed community engagement review. While consultation is still ongoing on the proposals contained in the review, it comes as no surprise that the consultants found many strengths of the AAPs that we could build upon in the future.

None of this would be possible without the dedication of AAP Boards, fellow councillors, partner organisations, members of the public and the AAP staff. So, thank you one and all. The AAPs would not be the success they have been without your continued support.

### **Councillor Elizabeth Scott,**

Cabinet portfolio holder for Economy and Partnerships.



Satley



Ushaw Volunteers



Hay bale



# Mid Durham Area Action Partnership 2022/23 Key Information



## FUNDING

**£220,299**

of AAP funding allocated to 22 local projects

**£166,563**

of County Councillor Neighbourhood Budget and small grant funding allocated to 75 local projects

**£127,019**

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



## COMMUNITY SUPPORT

**32** local community programmes delivered with just under £60,000 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'



## COMMUNICATION

**61,000** Times the community engaged through our social media (up 1% on last year)

**45** E-bulletins to over 1,100 local people, 1 each week, 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

**1,100** local people are AAP Forum members



Over **1,000** children and young people benefiting from school holiday provision

# 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 £347,000 (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

### Peter Ray (public representative)

This has been a very busy year for the AAP in working with our communities in this particularly challenging economic environment. Recognising everyone has experienced a leap in the cost of living and many of our local families having to 'make ends meet' over winter in particular.

As chair of the Mid-Durham Area Action Partnership, I have always been amazed with the work undertaken by the AAP with the many successes throughout the year. We have been successful in supporting local town and village projects in our second year of the three-year funding commitment. In this final year ahead, we have some remaining funds with projects still to complete and will have awarded £210k to projects making a difference in village and town centres.

We continue to recognise the key economic strains on our communities and this past year has seen more projects target those needing community outlets and activities in support of local people's economic wellbeing, mental health and general wellbeing. Warm Spaces has been a key programme linked to this, where we supported community buildings, churches and other facilities to cater for those trying to address domestic household costs, by providing an alternative free and warm space to gather with others in the same position.

I am sure you will agree when appreciating this annual report that you will see how the AAP remains steadfast in supporting its communities and has been able to rise to the challenges and impact positively on people's lives over this last year. 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.

This year ahead will be a time of transition, given the community engagement review, which impacts on the AAPs future. Although a time for change, the AAP will play its role in community life and continue this coming year to support local projects. 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 1,100 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. In addition, a Warm Spaces group was created over the colder months to support community projects delivering warm spaces for those in need.

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 2022/23 are:

Cllr Jean Chaplow  
Cllr Bev Coult  
Cllr Jonathan Elmer  
Cllr Mike McGaun (Vice Chair)  
Cllr Dan Nicholls  
Cllr Paul Taylor  
Cllr John Turnbull (Parish Council Rep)

Janet Box (Public Representative)  
Alison Gray (Public Representative)  
Peter Ray (Public Representative and 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)  
Paul Clitheroe (North Durham CCG)  
Gary Greenwood (Fire and Rescue Service)  
Amanda Healy/Helen Lynch (Durham County Council)  
Vacant (Business Representative)  
Mark Mallatratt/Elizabeth Jermey (Durham Constabulary)  
Paul Moralee (Housing Provider and Vice Chair)

Co-opted: Anne Marie Parkin (Believe Housing)

We'd also like to thank former Board members Lesley Baxter, Sophie Marston and Ellen Wilson (all public reps), Stephen Luke (Fire Service rep), Sgt Charlotte Burn (Police rep), Peter Mackie (Business rep) and Anne Bonner (Parish Cllr rep) all of whom stepped down from the Board this year.

# 2022/23 Funding Allocation

<b>Area Budget</b>
£12,148 OASES Summer Programme
£5,000 Esh Winning Residents Association Community Events
£14,263 Brandon Boxing Club Extension
£8,394 Burnhope Community Centre Burnhope Recovery Project
£7,166 Durham City Youth Project Langley Park Satellite Youth Clubs
£5,000 Brandon Sports Club Clubhouse and Car Park Extension
£5,000 Lanchester Partnership Lanchester and Burnhope Warm Spaces Project
£7,350 St Andrews Social and Physical Activity Project
£10,186 Ushaw Community Pontop Room Project
£10,000 Burnhope Parish Council Burnhope Play Area
£6,000 Karbon homes Silver Talk Telephone Befriending Service
£12,282 Hamsteels Community Centre Sustainability Improvements
£10,000 AAP Small Grant Pot
A further 9 local projects have been supported by Mid Durham AAP in 2022/23 totalling £95,306 (awaiting offer letters)
<b>Healthy Relationships</b>
£12,204 Learning a New Way Youth Z project
<b>Towns and Villages</b>
£28,000 Meadowfield Addison Park Play Area Improvements
£30,000 Esh Winning play area refurb & skatepark
£34,929 Wilks Hill-Quebec Footpath
£34,090 Burnhope play area refurbishment

<b>Councillor Towns and Villages</b>
£10,000 Esh Winning play area refurb & skatepark
£10,000 New Brancepeth Play
£20,000 Wilks Hill-Quebec Footpath
£4,572.50 Meadowfield Cemetery Path
£10,000 Black Road Car Park
£10,000 Burnhope play area refurbishment
£5,000 Broom Lane, Ushaw Moor
<b>Neighbourhood Budget</b>
£400 Durham Pride 2022 (Cross County application – funding relates to Mid Durham Cllr Contributions only)
£1,000 Satley Hearing Loop
£4,894 Cornsay Village Play Equipment
£9,402 Wilks Hill, Quebec – Rural Footway Improvements
£1,500 Satellite Youth Clubs
£4,000 Energy Appraisal Support
£3,800 Witton Gilbert Improvements (Durham AAP Project)
£2,101 New Brancepeth Christmas Tree 2022
£30,000 Esh Winning Play Area Refurbishment and Skate Park
£14,938 New Brancepeth Play Space Refurbishment
£8,643 New Brancepeth Dropped Kerbs
£10,800 Esh Winning VAS
£5,350 Broom Lane Ushaw Moor – Pedestrian Crossing
£1,000 Enhancing Cricket in Our Community – Lanchester
£2,500 Burnhope Heritage Display Project
£1,950 Burnhope Primary Heritage Banner
£4,920 New Flooring
£1,670 Table Tennis Coaching Development and Equipment
£1,995 Victoria Street Fencing Lanchester
£2,000 Burnhope Play Area
£4,155 Black Road Car Park
£2,159 St Patrick's School Langley Moor Bike and Scooter Stands
£2,070 Development Coaching
£1,609 Meadowfield Christmas Tree
£20,000 Brandon Boxing Club Extension

<b>Neighbourhood Budget Small Grant</b>
£400 Queen's Platinum Jubilee TRACC
£200 Jubilee Celebrations Satley
£100 Witton Gilbert Club FC Equipment
£280 Cornsay Colliery Barrel Planters
£400 Young People's Fitness Sessions
£999 Community Friendship
£455 Wellbeing Wins Weekly
£400 Remembrance Sunday
£50 Technical Updates Studio 3 AND Windows 11 Durham Hospital Radio
£890 Interpreting Steeleyhill Woods
£399 Sanctuary 21 Sleeping Bags
£50 Durham Remembrance Parade
£50 Christmas Pyjamas
£999 Langley Park Rainbows, Brownies and Guides Membership
£600 Replacement Defibrillator Cabinet
£300 Update of Fire Alarm and Safety System
£500 CCTV
£500 Bearpark Community Football Fees
£900 Brass Band Attending National Finals of Great Britain
£999 A Journey to Wilderness (equipment and activities)
£600 Autumn Harvest Festival
£999 Half Term Halloween Fun
£400 Village Christmas Party
£100 Kitchen Improvements and Running Costs
£100 Breakfast Club
£999 iPads
£250 Miners Gala Transport
£999 COVID Memorial Bench Parkwood Cemetery
£360 Lunch Club
£699 Queen's Platinum Jubilee – Lanchester Village Celebration
£150 Jubilee Street Party
£800 Picnic Benches
£999 Floor Sanding
£200 Purchase of Plants and Bulbs



# 2022/23 Funding Allocation

## Jubilee Small Grants

£200 Queen's Platinum Jubilee Fun Day

£100 Cornsay Jubilee Tree

£100 Queen's Jubilee Afternoon Tea

£200 Village Hall Association Celebration

£100 Remembrance Garden

£200 Memorial Garden for Platinum Jubilee

£300 Queen's Platinum Jubilee – Lanchester Village Celebration

£100 Jubilee Tree

£100 Floral Display for the Jubilee

£100 Jubilee Tree Planting

£100 Jubilee Celebrations

£100 Afternoon Tea and Party

£100 Tree and Bulb Planting

£200 Queen's Platinum Jubilee Event

£100 Tree Planting – Plaque to Commemorate Her Majesty The Queen

£300 High Street South Jubilee Party

£140 Jubilee Tea

£160 Queen's Platinum Jubilee Event

## Fun and Food

£2,695 Friends of Langley Park Primary

£11,949 Active to Learn (Ushaw Moor)

£9,384 Brandon Carrside Youth and Community Project

£1,000 Burnhope Community Centre

£3,805 New Brancepeth Parent & Toddler Group

£8,584 Natures Edge (Maiden Law)

£1,990 Learning A New Way

£2,494 St Johns Hall Meadowfield

£1,680 Castleside Community Association

£2,817 Durham City Youth Project

£7,320 The Allotment Project Waterhouses

£4,589 Ushaw historic House and Gardens

£633 Quebec & District Village Hall Association



New play park design for Addison park



Ushaw Play park



Fun and Food craft activity



Hollinside Terrace, Lanchester



Ushaw sculpture garden



Brancepeth Castle



# The Difference We Have Made

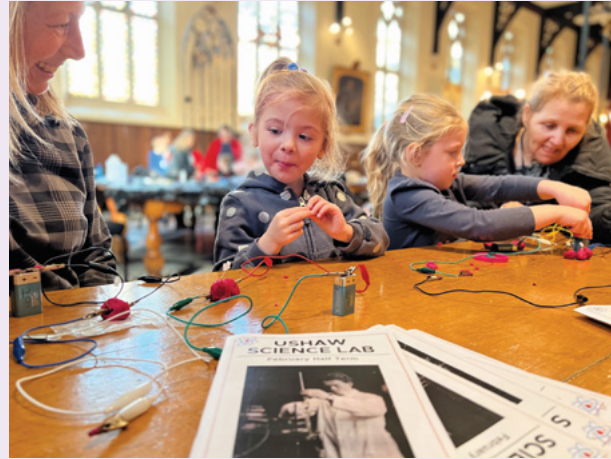


## OASES (Nature and Nurture)

OASES stands for Outdoor and Sustainability Education Specialists. based in Esh Winning and the organisation has been successfully delivering and promoting outdoor learning and global sustainability education for over 20 years. This project focuses on Forest Bathing sessions for pupils in The Durham Federation, Langley Park, Esh Winning, and Lanchester EP schools. These sessions are an early intervention and preventative support strategy that will enable children to connect with nature for the benefit of their wellbeing and to use breathing and stretching techniques to help them feel calm.

Forest Bathing sessions involve taking time to notice what they can see, hear and feel and undertaking activities enabling deeper immersion in, and exploration of, the natural environment. Breathing and stretching techniques to help the children to feel calm as they focus on being in the moment. Sit spots - choosing a place in the woodland to have a quiet moment by themselves to stop, notice and listen to the woodland.

Emerging research shows the impact of COVID-19 on mental health. An NHS Digital report in 2020 concluded that out of 3570 children, one in six aged 5 to 16 years were identified as having a probable mental disorder, increasing from one in nine in 2017. This increase in mental health difficulties is reflected in anecdotal evidence from school staff and increased referrals to mental health support services.



## 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 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 2022 and February 2023 thirty-two local projects were delivered across our communities giving access to activity and health food for over 700 children. In addition to the fun and food programme, the AAP funded its own summer programme across 7 villages providing multi-sports and outdoor learning and a further 400 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.



## Warm Spaces

Warm Spaces was a national movement to do just that; create warm spaces for people to gather as a measure to counteract the increase in living costs and in particular heating and domestic bills over the winter period. Locally the AAP formulated a group of local centres who were all providing a Warm Space service to the community. The AAP funded a particular partnership of centres in Lanchester and Burnhope where they came together to provide a multi-centre Warm Space offer for affected residents. This resulted in the development of a café facility in a community project whilst meeting the primary aims of supporting those more vulnerable and isolated in communities.

The collective group of centres providing warm spaces received information and support around providing referrals for advice services to help boost the finances of those on low income. The group learnt about factors affecting older people in communities and how these may be addressed. The group also learnt more about volunteers and funding for this programme.

Mid Durham AAP had the second highest amount of registered 'Warm space' provision across the county compared to other AAP areas. It is a credit to the community facilities across the AAP area for undertaking this programme.

# The Difference We Have Made



## St Andrews SPA

The SPA Tuesday group based in St Andrews Methodist Church in Brandon was originally established in 2014 with the idea of a "Holiday at Home"

Many who have attended the group stated that this was the first time they had been out of their home for months. The project is to provide a weekly session for older people who are not very physically mobile and are in danger of becoming isolated and depressed. The sessions provide crafts, games, gentle exercise, as well as refreshments and once a month the session is extended to include a lunch.

The members of the group have a diverse range of needs, many suffer from physical impairments that prevent them from leaving their homes without support. A number of those attending do have mental health issues and suffer from anxiety. People who attend do require transport as they are unable to get to the venue without assistance. Volunteers also keep in touch with the group members by telephone and doorstep visits.

The sessions give people the opportunity to meet socially with people of all ages, in a welcoming environment with dedicated volunteers to assist. An activity programme is developed with members which includes games such as Boules and New Age Curling and gentle exercise including Tai Chi and Qigong. Services are also invited in to give a talk, which gives greater access to those less able to services which may assist their needs.

Front cover image: View across Mid Durham AAP area

## Silver Talk

Silver Talk which is developed and managed by Karbon homes and provides a free-to-use telephone befriending service which alleviates loneliness in adults aged 50+ living. Operating in County Durham, Tyne & Wear and Northumberland's most isolated towns and villages, the service is home to a large-scale volunteer community who provide a weekly one-to-one phone-call to their allocated service user(s). As well as social chat, service-users are connected to local support services to increase their resilience and independence. Volunteers deliver the service supported by two salaried roles.

Silver Talk are looking to expand our face to face offering in Mid Durham area and secure a Kitemark for our volunteering service. The AAP funding has also contributed to the employment of a local person on a 12-month placement with the new start scheme.

In-depth research carried out in 2020 with our Silver Talk service users revealed a lack of positive feelings of wellbeing, together with high incidences of anxiety and depression. 96% of service users suffer from a long term physical or mental health condition; 46.2% never felt useful; and 19.2% never felt relaxed. Early research carried out during Covid-19 along with our day-to-day experience has suggested that feelings of anxiety, depression and loss of control are spiralling dangerously due to lockdown.

Once individuals join Silver Talk, they are re-surveyed 6 months later to reveal that 96% of service users now feel they have company because of support from Silver Talk in addition to feeling happier, less lonely, have made a new friend and feel more confident to cope.



Jubilee knitted decoration at Langley Park

## Contact Details

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