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# RAY WIND FUNDS

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## Ray Windfarm Fund Community Interest Company

Annual Report 2023

Fund report – Year 5

This report covers the operation of the fund from

1 June 2022 through to 31 May 2023

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## **The Chair**

I am pleased to introduce this fifth annual report of the Ray Windfarm Fund CIC. This will include details of Grants awarded.

Donations from the Funds total now over £1.5m over the five years. This is an amazing milestone. During the past year applications for funds have been extremely diverse. We have funded schools, a log bank, Young Farmers, youth clubs, local shows, transport, soup and sandwich socials, performing arts and community buildings.

The board has implemented many of the recommendations of the community survey report prepared in 2021. We have recruited new board members who bring a deeper insight into the needs of our community. By supporting businesses, we seek to ensure job opportunities and training is made available, keeping people in the area. We encourage applicants to seek match funding. We seek to enhance community engagement by holding public events.

I would like to thank all Board members for their support and substantial contributions to the running of the company and decisions made. Particular thanks are due to Jo Willis for her tireless and professional work as our Community Development Officer and for performing administrative duties.

D.R.B. BURN  
Chair, Ray Windfarm Fund CIC

## **Executive Summary**

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The Ray Windfarm Fund was established in 2017 by Vattenfall. Ray Windfarm Limited, on behalf of Vattenfall has committed funds for the life of the windfarm.

During the reporting year the sixth annual grant to the CIC was for the value of £237,500 and £100,000 to the Community Foundation.

The different funds set up by the CIC are detailed within the report. A summary of grants awarded within the year is:





Local Initiatives Fund	£261,052
Small Donations Fund	£10,310
Education Apprenticeship and Training Bursary	£6,000
Small Grants Programme, administered by the Community Foundation	£88,194

The CIC refers to the Community Action Northumberland (CAN) survey conducted in 2016 to form the basis for grant allocations. A similar survey has been commenced and findings will be reported within the next grant year. Progress reports are made to Parish Councils, on the website (<https://raywindfund.co.uk>) and on Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/ray.windfunds>).

## CIC Directors

All the Directors also form the 'Decision Panel' for funding applications made via Community Foundation for the Small Grants Programme as well as deciding applications made directly to the CIC.

	David Burn Chair	Birtley Parish Council	Member of the Finance and General Purposes Committee and Member of Application Review Committee
	Paul Cowie Vice Chair	Elsdon Parish Council	Chair of Application Review Committee
	Martin Chilvers Company Secretary	Otterburn Parish Council	Member of the Finance and General Purposes Committee
	Chris Robson Treasurer	Lay member	Chair of the Finance and General Purposes Committee
	Peter Ramsden	Bavington Parish Council	Member of Application Review Committee
	Katie Wood	Lay member	Member of the Finance and General Purposes Committee
	Sarah Crone	Lay member	Member of Application Review Committee
	Lesley Gosling	Lay member	Member of Application Review Committee
	Alison Thomson	Corsenside Parish representative	Member of the Finance and General Purposes Committee
	Deb Walton	Lay member	Member of the Application Review Committee

	Rev Sarah Lunn	Lay member	Member of the Application Review Committee
	Martin Dickson-Green	Lay member	Member of the Application Review Committee
	Mark Neale	Kirkwhelpington Parish Council	Member of the Finance and General Purposes Committee
	Joanne Willis	Community Development Officer	

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## Meetings

Currently there are monthly meetings of the full CIC Board. The minutes of each meeting are signed by the Chair (or his representative) after approval at the following meeting and are then published on the website.

The Finance and General Purposes Committee hold bi-monthly meetings.

The Application Review Committee hold meetings monthly.

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## CIC Journey to date

May 2016 - Ray Wind Farm Community Fund Steering Group is established.

August 2017 – The Ray Windfarm Fund Community Interest Company was incorporated.

March 2018 - Signing of Community Foundation agreement to administer the Small Grants Programme.

July 2018 - Grant agreement between Vattenfall and the Ray Windfarm Fund CIC signed.

March 2019 - CIC awards its first direct grants to the community.

July 2019 – First Open Annual Meeting held at Kirkwhelpington.

March 2020 – Open Community Meeting to seek feedback and ideas for future plans held at West Woodburn.

February 2022 – Community Consultation commenced with Katherine Williams and Helen Crowe recruited as consultants to undertake the work and produce a report.

June 2022 – Open Community Event planned to be held at The Gun at Ridsdale

Autumn 2023 – (date tbc) Open Community Event planned to be held at The Gun Ridsdal

## CIC Funding in the Community

The Ray Windfarm Fund Community Interest Company will support local initiatives that will secure lasting public benefits in a cost-effective and sustainable way. Funding will not be restricted to charitable activity and the aim is to be flexible in supporting projects relevant to the needs of the communities in the area of benefit.

Funding can be towards project costs, equipment or capital developments and may include provision for running costs. The work can be new, continuing or a one-off initiative.

Whatever you are seeking funding for must have a compelling case for support. That means being able to explain what you will do with the grant, who will benefit and how you know the work will be effective to the intended beneficiaries or cause. You will be asked about the work afterwards.

There are five strategic priority areas: -

- Improving community services and facilities, such as village halls and churches
- Promoting rural regeneration (including superfast broadband, sustainable transport, active travel, employment, housing, tourism, business development, apprenticeships and training)
- Increasing participation in and access to sports, culture, events and recreational activity
- Enhancing and preserving the natural environment for residents and visitors, nature trails, clearing pathways and waterways; planting orchards
- Celebrating the area's cultural, historical and archaeological heritage

### Equality and diversity.

We believe it is important to have processes, behaviours and a culture of operating that encourages participation and benefit to our full community and that everyone is properly valued and respected. This is regardless of age, disability, ethnicity (including race, colour and nationality), gender, gender reassignment, religion or belief, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, refugees and asylum seeker status, people's diverse communication needs and their record of offending.

The Directors of the CIC have decided that there are three broad purposes that they would like to see the Fund address:

- Charitable grants for the benefit of the community.
- Improving the physical infrastructure of the area (such as internet connection, mobile phone coverage and transport).
- A legacy fund that will benefit the area after the income from the wind farm ends.

Our vision is that in 25 years' time the Fund will have substantially improved the quality of life for people living in the vicinity of Ray Windfarm. In particular:

- The community facilities will be better and the levels of community activity will have increased.
- The infrastructure supporting the area will have been improved in accordance with Key Performance Indicators that are community priorities and identified in accordance with Schedule 3 of the Grant Agreement.
- The local economy will have improved through more businesses, more prosperous businesses and better local employment opportunities.

Thus, the people in the area will be better connected to each other and the wider world, more active locally and more prosperous. The aim is to ensure that such improvements are sustained.

## Income and Expenditure

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<b>Opening balance 1 June, 2022</b>		<b>£10,431.82</b>	
<b>Income</b>			
	Vattenfall Wind Power Ltd	£337,500.00	
	Other (inc bank int. B4RN shares/invest, Ins claim)	<u>£57,062.90</u>	
		<b><u>£394,562.90</u></b>	
<b>Expenditure</b>			
	Community Foundation Grants released in period	£100,000.00	
	Small Donation Fund	£134,945.00	
	EAT Bursary	£10,311.00	
	Schools	£4,500.00	
	Grants agreed but not yet released	<u>£74,270.00</u>	*
		<b><u>£53,337.00</u></b>	
<b>Fund Expenses</b>			
	Administrator costs	£13,973.54	**
	Fund expenses	£6,612.27	**
	Ongoing operational costs	<u>£0.00</u>	
		<b><u>£20,585.81</u></b>	
<b>Total available funds as at 31 May, 2023</b>		<b>£7,045.91</b>	

\* ~ Grants included £22,197 Cambo VH, £10,000 Otterburn Mill, £1,500 EAT Bursary, £9,640 ADAPT, £10,000 Groundwork

\*\* ~ Total of these two expenditures equates to 6.0% of the annual grant.

## The Funds & Criteria

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During the year there were five Funds:

**1) The Small Grants Programme (SGP)** supported charitable projects with awards normally of between £500 and £10,000. This programme was administered by the Community Foundation Tyne and Wear, advised by a panel of CIC Directors. Applications were made through the Community Foundation website. Applications were invited at any time of the year and were assessed by the Community Foundation and decisions made by the panel of CIC Directors on a rolling basis. Applications were made to the Community Foundation directly.

**2) The Local Initiatives Fund (LIF)** This fund is administered by the Ray Windfarm Fund CIC and is open to businesses and organisations which have the potential to deliver projects that are relevant to the needs of the communities in the area of benefit.

All applications are a two-stage process the first of which is to complete a preliminary enquiry form. Applicants will receive an acknowledgement within 10 days which will indicate the next date for consideration of applications.

It is expected that the CIC Board will meet on up to six occasions a year to consider applications.

**3) Small Donation Fund (SDF).** This fund was launched in the 2020-21 grant year with an initial £10,000 put aside. The maximum grant that can be provided is £500. The application process of this fund is simplified and an applicant only needs to send an email providing a few key pieces of information. The assessment of the applications is an accelerated process via email between the CIC Directors.

**4) The Education Apprenticeship and Training Bursary** This fund was established this year as a response to feedback from the community consultation project undertaken in the previous grant year. The fund is available to individuals over the age of 16 wishing to improve their employability prospects or develop a new career through further education, apprenticeships and training at all levels and to assist micro and small businesses to retain staff or create new employment opportunities.

**5) The Legacy Fund** This fund is intended to continue providing community benefit beyond the operational life of the wind farm.

## Grants Agreed

Grants Awarded from the Local Initiatives Fund		
<b>Grant Paid</b>		
Upper Redesdale Show Society	£5,500	Upper Redesdale Show Office/ Storage Shed
Wark Primary School	£8,540	To fund extra-curricular activities and cost of living support for families
Belsay Primary School	£14,130	To fund extra-curricular activities and cost of living support for families
Cambo First School	£11,540	To fund extra-curricular activities and cost of living support for families
Chollerton First School	£9,250	To fund extra-curricular activities and cost of living support for families
Otterburn Primary School	£10,510	To fund extra-curricular activities and cost of living support for families
Bellingham Primary School	£12,110	To fund extra-curricular activities and cost of living support for families
Bellingham Middle School	£4,900	To fund extra-curricular activities and cost of living support for families
Chollerton Preschool	£1,190	To fund extra-curricular activities and cost of living support for families
North Tynies	£2,100	To fund extra-curricular activities and cost of living support for families
Chollerton Preschool	£4,539	Towards the cost of replacement kitchen and storage facilities
North Tyne Youth	£15,725	Youth Worker position
North Tyne Web Design	£981	Towards new equipment for business
Northumberland Logbank	£200	Towards fuel costs
Queens Hall Arts	£6,000	Towards Beneath our Feet Schools project exploring the mining history of the area
Wark Recreational Charity	£15,000	Towards replacement roof on clubhouse
Foxton Leak Detection	£3,000	Towards the cost of a website and van livery for new leak detection service
Cambo Young Farmers County Rally	£10,000	Towards the costs of hosting the County Rally at Cambo
J Irving Roofing Contractor	£9,600	Towards the cost of new scaffolding
Bellingham Golf Club	£15,000	Towards the cost of entrance road resurfacing
The Groom Room	£1,400	Towards the cost of outdoor dog washing area for larger dogs
Chollerton PCC	£20,000	Towards the costs of internal redecoration of St Giles Church
Corsenside Parish Show	£3,000	Towards the cost of parish show
Northumberland Wildlife Trust	£20,000	For red squirrel conservation ranger, training, equipment and community engagement events
Northern Stoneworks	£5,000	Start-up business costs



<b>Grant agreed but not yet paid</b>		
Adapt	£9,640	Bus service from Byrness to Morpeth for the coming year
Otterburn Mill	£10,000	Towards the cost of tenterhook restoration
Cambo Village Hall	£22,197	Towards the building work to create accessible doorway and replacement kitchen
Groundwork NE	£10,000	Towards peat restoration project in Harwood
<b>Total</b>	<b>£261,052</b>	

<b>Grants awarded from Education Apprenticeship and Training Bursary (EAT Bursary)</b>		
<b>Grant Paid</b>		
Individual Corsenside	£1,500	Performing Arts Course, Liverpool
Individual Birtley	£1,500	Agricultural College, York
Individual Bellingham	£1,500	North Tyneside Apprenticeship Healthcare Course
<b>Grant agreed but not yet paid</b>		
Individual Birtley	£1,500	Performing Arts Course, New York
<b>Total</b>	<b>£6,000</b>	

<b>Grants awarded from Small Donation Fund</b>		
<b>Grant Paid</b>		
Otterburn Primary School	£500	Outdoor wellbeing area
Otterburn Children's Party Fund	£380	Towards cost of village coach trip to coast
NT & RCP	£500	Towards operating costs of Soup & Sandwich Social
Kirkwhelpington Youth Club	£400	Towards Christmas Trip
Corsenside PC	£153.22	Defibrillator replacements
Individual Kirkwhelpington	£475	Towards NYE Party Costs in Kirkwhelpington
Birtley PC	£155	Flower bed edging in Birtley village
Wark Town Hall	£500	Warm Hub Events
Friends of Harbottle Castle	£500	History Days for school
Otterburn Primary School Choir	£500	CD production costs at Thropton Recording studio
PCC Otterburn	£499	Towards cost of replacement lawnmower
Olive & Myrtle	£298	Computer equipment to streamline business
Chollerton Preschool	£500	Towards costs for end of year trip for children and parents
Corsenside PC	£500	Towards speed indicator sign battery
Bird in Bush	£500	Towards cost of defibrillator relocation to pub
Otterburn PC	£218.94	Otterburn, Elsdon and RTC defibrillator pad replacements
RTC Sports	£500	Towards cost bus service to and from Rede River Rocks
RTC Sports	£500	Towards cost of cross trainer
Barrasford Playground Committee	£328.21	Cost of replacement cradle swing in playpark

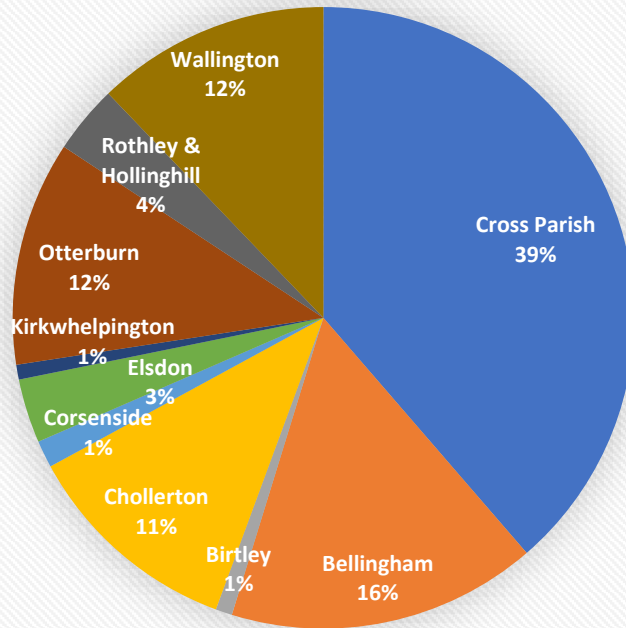
All Stars Active CIC	£404	Towards running costs of sports school holiday camp at RTC
Individual Elsdon	£500	Towards cost of specialist wheelchair for disabled child
NT & RCP	£500	Towards running costs of Soup & Sandwich Social
Elsdon Village Hall	£500	Towards cost of installing a heavy duty electric cable to power generator
Kirkwhelpington Youth Club	£500	Towards cost of football jerseys and hoodies for youth club attendees
<b>Total</b>	<b>£10,310</b>	

<b>Grants awarded from Small Grants Programme (Community Foundation)</b>		
<b>Grant paid</b>		
St Christophers Church, Gunnerton	£6,356	Towards costs for internal redecoration
Elsdon Village Hall	£2,044	Towards the purchase of picnic benches and to replace drinks fridges.
Wallington FC	£5,750	Stage 2 & 3 architectural work for a new clubhouse
Otterburn PC	£4,123	Towards the cost of installation of a permanent power source to Millenium Green and carbon reduction measures
Elsdon PC	£8,640	To install a speed indicator device in Elsdon village
Northumberland Citizens Advice Bureau	£7,500	Towards expansion of the benefits team capacity
Miscreations Theatre	£3,331	Creative workshops and performances for 5 local schools
Holy Trinity Church	£5,000	Towards the cost of future-proofing the church with toilet facilities
Kirkharle Creative	£3,000	Towards programme of music performances in St Wilfred's Church
The Charlotte Straker Project	£5,000	Towards costs for annual activities for elderly residents
Northumberland Domestic Abuse Service	£10,000	Towards core costs to support victims of domestic abuse.
Redesdale Archaeology Group	£5,000	Towards analysis of artefacts and environmental samples
NTC Touring Theatre Company	£1,450	Towards the costs of a performance of Frankenstein at Kirkwhelpington Memorial Hall
PCC Otterburn Parish*	£11,000	Towards the removal, repair and refixing of guttering at Church of St John the Evangelist
Bellingham PCC*	£10,000	Towards the cost of installing a new electrical heating system in St Cuthbert's Church, Bellingham
<b>Total</b>	<b>£88,194</b>	

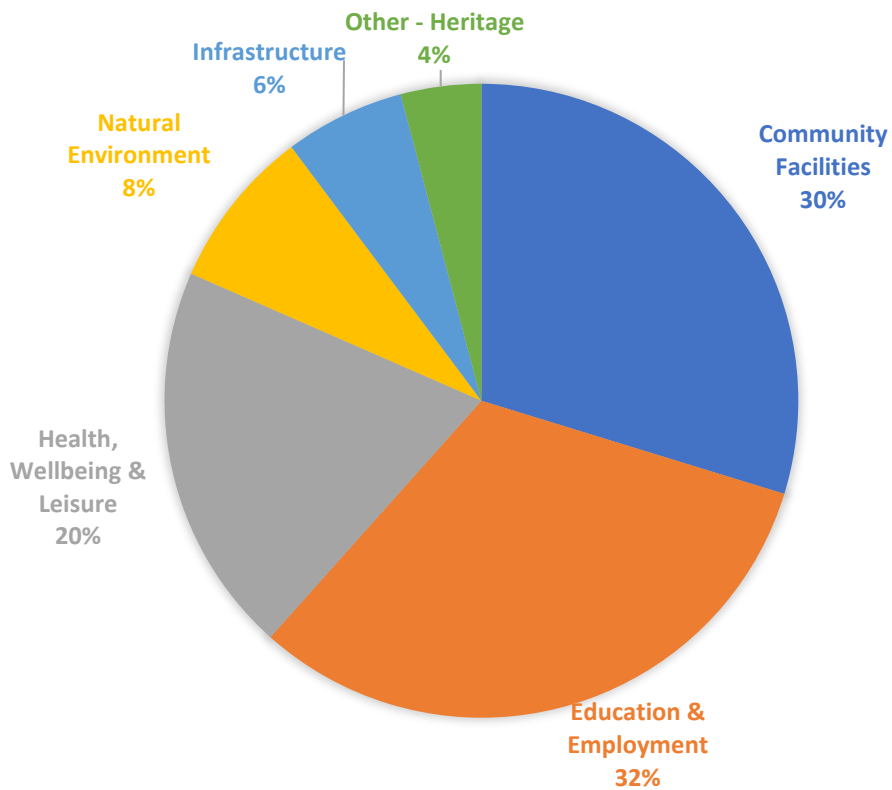
\*Funds allocated though not yet transferred, due to the need to secure match funding

The total Grants split by applications from Parishes within the catchment area and against the broad priorities highlighted from the CAN survey are shown in the two charts below.

### Grants awarded by Parish



### GRANT AWARDS BY PRIORITY



## Fund achievements in 2022-2023

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The Funds continued to support Primary and First Schools within the area of benefit and with financial pressures on families with the cost-of-living crisis Directors approved an increase in the usual £30,000 and awarded £74,270, which was split between the three school terms. Bellingham Middle School and some Pre-school settings were also included in this increased funding. Schools were given the freedom to use the money to either target those who were struggling financially or spread the cost across the pupils. Many chose to do both, funding breakfast and after school clubs, covering the cost of swimming which eased the burden on families who normally pay a contribution towards these costs. Many schools used the funds to cover the cost of transport for extra-curricular trips which otherwise would not have been possible.

Chollerton Pre-school also benefitted from a grant to improve their kitchen facilities which made their learning space much safer for the children and extra child friendly storage for learning resources too. Several schools benefitted from the Small Donations Fund with an end of term trip including parents for Chollerton Pre-school to Walby Farm. Otterburn Primary School choir and ukulele group had a day trip to the recording studio at Thropton, which they thoroughly enjoyed, and a CD with 15 songs is well worth a listen. Bellingham Middle School, Bellingham Primary School, Wark C of E Primary School and Otterburn Primary School also took part in the Beneath our Feet project learning about the industrial heritage of the area with funding awarded to Queens Hall Arts, match funded with a Historic England grant. The children picked the artists they wanted to collaborate with and worked on different methods of presenting their work through animation, drama, visual arts and music. An exhibition will be staged at the Queens Hall in Hexham.

Two newly established businesses have been supported, one a sole trader providing web design services through a grant for computer hardware. The other providing stonemasonry services to the local area with the hope of creating further employment once the business becomes established.

Several businesses also added to the services they were able to offer, The Groom Room added outdoor hot and cold washing facilities for large dogs providing a service that was lacking within the area of benefit. Foxton Plumbing had invested in leak detection equipment and received a grant towards a website and promotional livery for their vehicle to ensure as many people know about the new service, this will allow for swift detection of leaks and minimise the cost of investigative works for those who experience an unfortunate incident such as this by using a local contractor.

Community facilities at Wark Recreational Charity have been improved with the replacement of the roof on the clubhouse ensuring the space can continue to be used for private functions as well as the weekly sporting clubs that use them. The Bellingham Golf Club and local community had been raising funds through many activities such as race nights and raffles and together with a grant from the Ray Wind Funds this allowed them to pay for the resurfacing of their access road helping those who play golf at the club, attend functions at the clubhouse or visit Carriages café. Cambo Village Hall will be undergoing some improvements to the kitchen and ensuring the entrance is accessible for all users of the hall and had secured £15,500 from other funders to match the funding from the Local Initiatives Fund.

Two local shows were supported with a grant towards running costs for Corsenside Show matching funds raised by the Show committee and the Corsenside community throughout the year. Upper Redesdale Show Society also received a grant towards a shed on the show field, allowing for the safe storage of equipment and negating the need to move equipment down the A68, it will also act as the show office on show day, meaning no need to hire a trailer to host the show office. The Show Society received funds from Revitalising Redesdale towards the project too.

The community consultation last year found that the local environment was important to people in the area of benefit and should be preserved for people to access it for their mental wellbeing and enjoyment. Because of this finding, Directors awarded two grants towards red squirrel preservation with community engagement events and monitoring and a peat restoration project.

A concern that was aired at the community event at The Gun surrounding the issues for young people in the area to access further education due to spiralling transport costs and the inability to remain in the area to undertake further education and training, led Directors to establish the Education Apprenticeship and Training Bursary. Four awards were made in the first year, with amounts up to £1,500 available for the first year and lesser amounts for subsequent years. The people who received the bursaries while attending further education further outside the county will be coming back with

new skills that will benefit the area. This bursary is also available for small businesses who wish to upskill their staff.

### **Next 12 Months Plans**

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The Education Apprenticeship and Training Bursary will continue to be promoted at the upcoming event at The Gun, contact has been made with the Northumberland Federation of Young Farmers so that information can be filtered through to the clubs and members in our area of benefit.

Directors have several priorities that were raised by the community consultation work in the previous grant year.

- Community transport – continuation of the ADAPT weekly dial-a-service from Byrness through to Morpeth which began in July 2021 and has good passenger numbers and feedback, this will be repeated in the 2023-24 grant year. Collaborative work has also begun with a transport collective to try to address some of the issues facing people within the area of benefit, the need to increase the number of volunteer drivers is an immediate priority as well as more routes for those who find public transport a struggle.
- The broadband rollout within the area of benefit continues to be a priority, despite the grant award in the previous grant year, approval for the Gigabit voucher scheme had not been granted by the government. The Ray Wind Funds will continue to offer support to the community group B4NTR working on this initiative.
- Community facilities and ensuring they become resilient to inclement weather in the wake of Storm Arwen.
- Local small businesses and improving employment opportunities
- Directors will continue to assess the needs of the schools within the area and evaluate how they can assist those families who are experiencing difficulties.
- Work has begun with the Church and Community Partnership Tynedale to help community facilities and businesses within the area of benefit work towards becoming dementia friendly.

Following the next community engagement event at The Gun in the autumn, grant surgeries will be established for those who wish to apply for grants to ask questions and receive advice and assistance completing forms.

The importance of working with other agencies within the area came to light within the community consultation and the importance of forging stronger links to share ideas and initiatives and award grants with match funding will continue to be a priority.

Directors have begun internal conversations about the Community Foundation Small Grants Programme and whether to bring this in house, this will mean the whole yearly Vattenfall donation will be administered directly by the Ray Wind Funds, with a proportion of the funds being ringfenced for charitable and community organisations.

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One of the multi school sporting days

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**Belsay Primary School, Bellingham Primary School, Cambo First School, Chollerton First School, Otterburn Primary School, Wark C of E Primary School, Bellingham Middle School, Chollerton Pre-school and North Tynies – towards extra-curricular activities and funding to alleviate the cost-of-living burden to families**

**£74,270 collectively**

### **Local Initiatives Fund**

In previous years £30,000 has been awarded to all Primary and First schools children within the area attend, this has been split between the three terms. Directors acted swiftly this year to increase the funding awarded as schools reported that their school communities were suffering financially with increased household costs for energy, food and transport.

As a result of the increased funding some schools were able to assist pupils who were receiving free school meals and were able to offer breakfast clubs and after schools clubs for no charge, which has helped to increase attendance. Children whose families were struggling financially had costs for trips subsidised or paid for entirely enabling the children to attend with their peers. Swimming lessons which are part of the curriculum for primary school aged children have become difficult for some families to afford. While the costs of the lessons are covered within the school budget the transport costs for the children to access the lessons is not. The grant funding has meant that some schools have been able to cover the cost of swimming transport entirely and families have not been asked to contribute which has made a huge difference.

Extra-curricular trips help to enrich children's learning experiences and living within our rural area can mean that the transport costs to access these experiences can be cost prohibitive. The grants to schools allow them to visit new places and broaden their learning.

Our local schools often participate in sporting activities together such as tag rugby, cross country and football this allows the children who may attend Middle or High schools together to interact and form friendships at an earlier age. The grant money from the Ray Wind Funds can cover the transport to allow children to participate.



A trip to experience lambing at a local farm



A trip to Simonburn Church for a Pentecost day



**Cambo Young Farmers County Rally – towards the cost of hosting the County Rally at a farm in Cambo**

**£10,000**

**Local Initiatives Fund**

This year was the turn of Cambo Young Farmers to host the Northumberland County Rally and they approached the Ray Wind Funds for a grant to assist with the costs of hosting such a large event. The Rally Day is a fun day for all attendees filled with varied competitions such as floral art, baking, fashion design, stock judging, tug of war, quad driving. The competitions allow members to learn new transferrable skills which can be added to their CV, helping to make them more employable in the future. It's also about having fun, mixing with other clubs from across the county, healthy competition and bragging rights at the end of the day. There were approximately 500 young farmers in attendance, both past and present members from across the county and roughly 400 members of the public came to spectate on Rally Day too.

The grant was put towards items such as the first aid presence on rally day, competition equipment, portable toilets, programmes, signage and public address systems, lighting and power. This made the event run in a safe, appropriately staffed and resourced way ensuring that everyone was able to enjoy their day.

The Cambo Young Farmers Rally team were especially good at promoting the event and publicising the funding awarded by the Ray Wind Funds through social media and inclusion in the programme. This is hugely beneficial to the Ray Wind Funds as it allows more people to become aware of the funding opportunities that are available for projects that deliver community benefit to our area.

Claire Thompson of Northumberland Federation of Young Farmers said, "we were able to put on a well organised event for the Northumberland Young Farmers members and their families, friends and supporters of the organisation. We would recommend the Ray Wind Funds to others."





**Charlotte Longlands – towards costs involved with attending first year of Level 3 NVQ Advanced Technical Agriculture (arable) course at Askham Bryan College, York**

**£1,500**

**Education Apprenticeship and Training Bursary**

Charlotte did not wish to remain at school after GCSE's and surprised her parents with her desire to move away from home on the family farm near Birtley and attend agricultural college in York. This move meant that Charlotte leaves for college on a Sunday evening and returns home on Thursdays therefore allowing time for her to earn extra money to fund her expenses on a weekend while at home and in the holidays. There are costs involved with this including accommodation, travel, food, course associated costs – textbooks, PPE, and computer hardware to carry out assignments.

The bursary has helped towards the cost of some of these items and will allow Charlotte to go on course related excursions that she may otherwise miss out on.

Charlotte is hoping to bring knowledge home to help with life on the farm such as trialling the planting of new grass seed varieties to improve soil nutrition and therefore benefit the grazing livestock. She has made friends from across the county and has gone to visit and undertake work experience with them learning about new arable and livestock management systems that can be transferred to the home farm and will potentially lead to future employment within the industry.

“My academic performance has been proven to be one of the highest in the year, and I am proud that I have maintained the highest grades throughout the year through the hard work put in, this was made easier with the support of the Ray Windfarm Community Benefit Fund which enabled me to purchase a laptop and associated accessories meaning I had access to good IT equipment for my studies.”



**North Tyne & Redesdale Community Partnership – to support the weekly soup and sandwich social**

**£500**

**Small Donations Fund**

After the Covid pandemic North Tyne & Redesdale Community Partnership who are based in Bellingham felt there was a need to help to curb the social isolation that is often experienced in rural areas. The Soup & Sandwich Social has become a regular Monday fixture in Bellingham, held at the Reed Hall, anyone can attend and receive a free lunch and have a catch up with friends. They also take food to people who they know are unable to leave their homes. They regularly attract between 40-60 people from the local area, many of whom live alone and would otherwise not be able to see many people. There have also been people who have moved in the village attend to meet and make friends who now volunteers for NT & RCP.

This event is funded by the NT & RCP and they use local businesses to make the food, alternating weekly. This then also helps those businesses in the off-peak season as they have a guaranteed income on the day they provide the food. NT & RCP needed a small amount of funding to top up their kitty while waiting for a larger application to be processed. The community benefit of the project was clearly evident and the need to be able to apply for the funding quickly meant that the Small Donations Fund was the best route for NT & RCP, where decisions are made via email once all relevant information has been provided.

“Soup and sandwich has become an important regular event for over 50 residents, giving them a social lifeline as well as an opportunity to get access to other social support services. The funding kindly provided by the Ray Wind Funds will help us to keep providing this service for the coming year, ensuring that we can keep supporting isolated residents.” Ben Dickson-Green.