£400,000 in 'levelling up' funding awarded to Cumbrian projects

Monday 15 April, 2024

Cumbria Community Foundation has awarded almost £400,000 to organisations in the county as part of the Government's 'levelling up' programme, which aims to address geographical inequalities across the UK.

Funding was given to provide start-up business support advice and to help move those furthest from the labour market closer to employment by upskilling and providing volunteering opportunities.

Cumbria Community Foundation managed applications to the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) and Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) on behalf of Cumberland Council, working together with Cumbria Social Enterprise Partnership.

In total, £389,994 was awarded to projects across Cumberland.

Growing Well received **£23,036** towards the cost of a minibus service at their new site in Egremont. The organisation offers free targeted and specialist mental health intervention to adults who are experiencing mental ill health by involving them in outdoor activities at their three market gardens in Cumbria.

Growing Well's Partnerships Manager for North Cumbria, Catherine Bentley, said: "The money we received has enabled us to buy a minibus for our new site in Egremont and help fund driver recruitment and training, also creating jobs in the local community.

"Growing Well offers free transport to site for all its volunteers and by doing so removes barriers to accessing free mental health support for people who live in isolated communities or don't have their own transport but who badly need our help."

The Rebuild Site CIC was awarded **£39,940** towards the expansion of its operations into West Cumbria. The social enterprise was formed in Carlisle with the aim of taking surplus materials from construction sites and giving them to charities and community groups for building, gardening, crafting, and repair projects.

Director Maisie Hunt said: "We are delighted to have been awarded funding through the UKSPF and REPF to support the expansion of The Rebuild Site CIC into Workington.

"The grant will allow us to set up a second site with a community focus, bringing low cost materials and sustainable, practical and DIY skills sharing to the area, and reduce useful materials going to waste."

Centre for Leadership Performance received **£19,500**
to run a series of workshops for businesses and soon-to-be retirees to ensure a successful transition to retirement, other employment or volunteering opportunities.

The Sense of Purpose programme aims to increase the life satisfaction and wellbeing of those retiring; enable them to remain economically active for longer; improve their sense of belonging and community through volunteering; and reduce their reliance on health and social care services.

Catherine Eve, Executive Director of Centre for Leadership Performance, said: "Thanks to the funding, we have been able to scale up our Sense of Purpose programme. This means we can reach more retirees, helping them to plan for a fulfilling retirement and connect them to more local services, volunteering and employment opportunities.

"Retirees have a wealth of knowledge, skills and experience; Sense of Purpose enables them to continue to add value to their local community."

Other projects to receive funding include:

- **£33,800** to **Charge My Street**, to provide two new electric vehicle charge points in St Bees and associated community engagement
- **£16,160** to **Newton Rigg Limited**, towards the cost of a manager to promote land-based

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apprenticeships and courses in Cumberland
- **£52,262** to **Proud and Diverse Cumbria** CIC towards the refurbishment of the Choose Life cafe and community hub in Whitehaven
- **£22,435** to **Cumbria Chamber of Commerce** for its Cumberland self-employment business support programme
- **£37,558** to Age UK Carlisle and Eden towards its Connect and Empower initiative, which boosts digital skills and volunteering prospects for those in their late 50s to early 60s

In total, more than £1.3 million has been awarded in Cumberland from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and Rural England Prosperity Fund.

Leader of Cumberland Council, Cllr Mark Fryer, said: “Dozens of businesses and organisations have benefited from the funding and more than £1.3 million has been granted so far. We would like to thank partners for their support and look forward to seeing these funded schemes develop in the future.”

Annalee Holiday, Head of Grants Practice & Programmes at the Foundation, said: "We know how innovative our communities, charitable organisations and social enterprises are in identifying and initiating activities for the benefit of residents. To be able to access revenue and capital costs through this allocation of funding can make the world of difference for such initiatives. This will have a real impact – from individual businesses to entire communities.

"A further round of UKSPF and REPF grant funding will be open for application in the upcoming weeks. Please get in touch if you would like to apply."

For more information about grant funding available through Cumbria Community Foundation, visit www.cumbriafoundation.org, call the grants team on 01900 820827 or email grants@cumbriafoundation.org

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