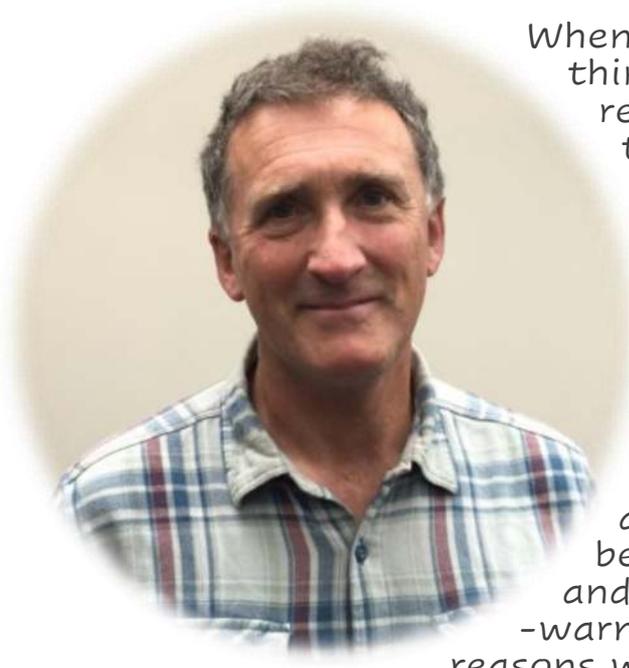




Annual Impact Report 2021



Introductions



When I wrote the Chair's report last year, I think we all hoped that 2021 would see a return to normality - we now know that this was not to be! The continued restrictions caused by the pandemic have meant that we have all had to get used to more of the "new normal". The stresses caused by coronavirus, and the changing face of Agriculture have meant in 2021 the support and advice provided by UTASS has been as vital as ever. The hardworking staff, led by our manager Bob Danby, have all gone above and beyond to make sure that UTASS has been there for people throughout Teesdale and Weardale. Their dedication is truly heart-warming, and without doubt is one of the reasons why UTASS is held in such high regard.

We have said goodbye to four members of Staff over the past year, all of them of long standing, and I would like to thank them for their fantastic contributions- they are Jen Smurthwaite, Alison Greaves, Zelda Heney, and Theo Clapp. We wish them all well in their new lives, and hope that they will keep in touch.

2022 marks the end of my five year tenure as Chair. It has truly been an honour to have carried out this role for UTASS, and I have so many memories to treasure: showing the King of Lesotho around the Dale, attending a science fair with the youngsters, meeting Prince Charles as part of the 25th anniversary celebrations, and witnessing the wealth of local creative talent at the annual Christmas Fair at the Mart - to name but a few. I will also remember the support of the Trustees and Staff, which has made my role such a pleasure. I welcome Michael McGarry as the new Chair, and am looking forward to working with him and all of you in my continuing role as a Trustee.

As a charity reliant on external funding we are always conscious of what the future may bring, but there is no doubt that UTASS is currently in a strong position. This is thanks to the many people who combine to make UTASS the organisation it is: the wonderful UTASS Staff, our Patrons, Trustees and of course our Volunteers who give so much to the organisation.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'R. Matthews'.

With very best wishes

Richard Matthews MA, MRCVS
Chair of UTASS
Veterinary Surgeon

Introductions

2021 was another busy year for UTASS. The repeated changes to lockdown quickly convinced us that any firm planning about the services we provide was futile. However, as you read through this report I hope you will agree our staff and volunteers have delivered those services brilliantly.

Some members have expressed concern that we have reduced the level of support to our agricultural members. I want to reassure you that we do everything we have always done. We just do a lot more in addition.

I could not pretend that we are back to normal, but I'm certain you will agree that we are in a far better place than we were at this time last year. I hope my optimism for 2022 is not misplaced.

Every year I highlight the UTASS staff for their dedication to providing a service to dales residents. Every year they prove just how much they deserve credit for that.

On the Friday when Storm Arwen struck in November, we were due to help Santa visit 74 children in Upper Teesdale, the following day we were due to hold the Christmas Fair at Middleton Mart. To my utmost amazement both went ahead! No credit to me as I was on the beach in Gran Canaria. I didn't get off the hook totally however as my mobile number is the emergency contact for UTASS.

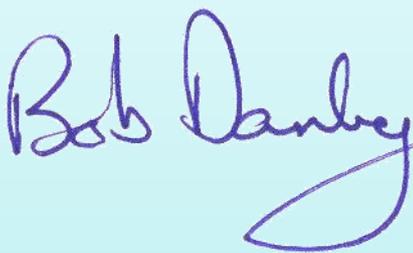
My personal thanks to you the UTASS staff, thank you for your dedication, thank you for never saying no, thank you for finding solutions to problems that are way, way, outside of the UTASS norms.

I am proud to be able to support you in your work.

Equally I want to highlight our amazing volunteers. Once again this year, I extend my heartfelt thanks to all of those who contributed to the £65,000 worth of volunteer time which enabled UTASS to function.

We couldn't do what we do without you!

Here's to 2022, the challenges it will undoubtedly bring, and the help and support we can give to people in the Durham Dales.



Bob Danby CMgr MCMI
UTASS Manager, Company Secretary
Treasurer



Farming Support

2021 saw further progress in the development of our farming support team, Richard and Tess, and Charlotte and Emma who bring with them enhanced IT skills.

In anticipation of the new schemes and opportunities that the Agricultural Transition Plan will bring, Charlotte and Emma are increasingly dealing with more complex matters, to relieve the pressure on Richard and Tess.

The team endeavour to help members find solutions to a wide range of problems, but are always aware that mistakes can have severe financial implications. This responsibility is stressful for the staff. Multiple checks throughout the process helps to reduce their anxiety.

Assisted with

212

BPS claims in
2021

Basic Payment Scheme

(BPS) The 2021 application window opened in mid March 2021 during the third Covid 19 national lockdown. Having completed BPS applications remotely in 2020, repeating the process for a second year seemed to work well by telephone appointments.

However discussions around wider farming issues, cross Compliance and the Agricultural Transition Plan were inevitably brief due to the lack of definitive detail from Defra. BPS phasing out began in 2021, and will continue until it will cease after 2024.

Grants & Countryside Stewardship Assistance For many of our members these schemes are as important as BPS! We continued to offer assistance with annual extensions to HLS agreements and SSSI consents as well as checking that Annual Claims were submitted by the 15th May deadline.

Again, we were able to support members with applications to the Hedgerow and Boundary Capital Grants Scheme, despite the application window coinciding with the BPS application window. Charlotte has developed an expertise in this area particularly in negotiating the laborious claim procedure and the presentation and labelling of photographic evidence.

Help with applications for new Countryside Stewardship

agreements continued, as did aiding members with appeals for penalties and RPA demands for evidence of compliance.

“The drama started in May 2021 when I received an invoice for a considerable amount of money which the RPA said was for a breach of agreement.

Richard at UTASS had previously helped me with this matter to make sure this would not happen. However the RPA persisted.

Thanks to Richard knowing the correct procedures to get to the bottom of it, before further action was taken.

In such a stressful and worrying situation having someone to turn to who knows the inner workings of the RPA is vital, without UTASS I would not have known who could help. I am forever grateful.”

Richard Spry
Member

“If UTASS wasn't here I'd have to pack-up farming! It doesn't matter what I ring you about, the ladies on reception can always find an answer.”

John Watson
Member

82%

of users say that
UTASS helps to
reduce stress

Farming Support

Agricultural Secretary

Tessa's continued support to businesses is vital. Business changes, updating bank account details, farm assurance, tenancy issues, succession, record keeping, cross compliance, and planning have all been handled by Tess, and the team over the last year.

Collectively we have tried to keep up to date with the many changes that are coming and to play as full a part as possible in trying to ensure that future schemes recognize the needs of our members: for some of our staff this has meant an incredible amount of time participating in Zoom calls.

59%
of users say that
UTASS helps them
deal with farm
paperwork.

Graziers Groups

During the last year most of the graziers associations have been unable to meet as required by their agreement, but Richard was able to complete the process remotely to have their HLS agreements extended a further year..

Cotherstone Moor started a new Countryside Stewardship agreement in 2021. This has involved a considerable programme of peat restoration, which wasn't without it's problems.

Briefings

Again, these were one of the few services that remained 'normal' during the pandemic, Richard does a remarkable job of translating complicated jargon and large policy documents into bite-sized language the ordinary person can understand and digest.

Providing a voice

UTASS has collaborated and engaged not just at local levels, but also regionally and nationally, to ensure that the voice of Durham Dales farmers gets heard when the Government is developing a national agricultural Policy to replace the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) after Brexit.

The development of Environmental Land Management (ELM) and in particular the Sustainable farming Incentive (SFI) has occupied a considerable amount of Richards time. On several occasions Richard has met our MP Dehenna Davidson and DEFRA Minister Victoria Prentice MP, including personal visits to hear the concerns about the replacement BPS schemes being far from being "fit for purpose" and the need for financial sustainability for farmers if the government's ambitions for ELM are to be realised.



Farm For The Future

In September we ran a series of meetings across both Teesdale and Weardale, inviting farmers and their families to come along together to find out about the 'Farm for the Future' programme and also hear details about the agricultural transition plan, which was, and still is a huge concern for all our farming members.

100 local farm businesses signed up to the 'Farm for the Future' programme;



“Ian Cairns' Business Skills workshop made a rather boring subject truly alive and relevant by bravely using figures from his own farm enterprise.

An enthusiastic speaker made soil carbon interesting and informative

The one-to-one session with a local consultant was invaluable in planning a way forward. (You really hit on the right person for us!)

We can also recommend the sessions at UTASS for their good suppers!!”

Ann Godschalk
Member

The Farm for The Future programme entails a series of meetings, delivered in partnership with the Prince's Countryside Fund and other farm support groups from across England, and funded by the Defra Future Farming Resilience Fund.

£10.75
of social benefit for every £1 invested according to Future Farming Resilience Project Findings



Sessions towards the end of 2021 focused on how to look at business finances and develop plans to help prepare for the future, when the Basic Payment Scheme ends, and on potential environmental opportunities and the changes that are coming to land management schemes.

Access to Services



Durham County Carers Support are an independent, charitable organisation. We work closely with

them, referring members within County Durham who are carers to enable them to receive information, advice and support.

69% of users say they feel they have a say on the services provided at UTASS

Barnard Castle **Post Office** runs a satellite branch from UTASS twice a week.



These sessions remain vitally important for the rural community of Upper Teesdale.

The service also has an environmental benefit, saving people making the 20 mile return journey to Barnard Castle.

Used **3532** times in 2021, saving **70,640** miles

“ The yoga and mindfulness has been restful and relaxing at a time when everyone has felt stressed. June’s voice is incredibly therapeutic .”

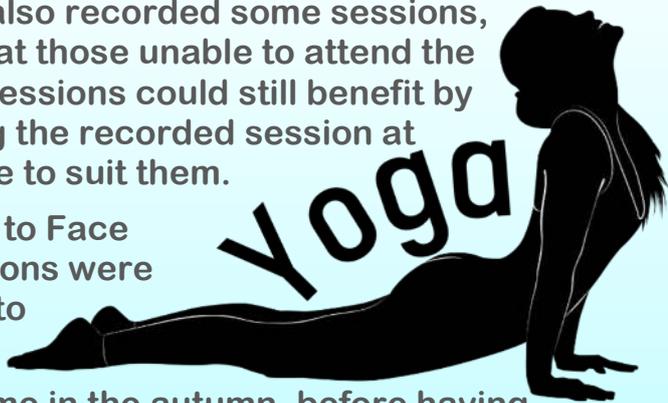
Wendy Stafeckis
Resident

June Wainwright was able to continue here **Weekly Yoga** sessions sessions on Zoom during the lockdown.

She also recorded some sessions, so that those unable to attend the live sessions could still benefit by doing the recorded session at a time to suit them.

Face to Face sessions were able to

resume in the autumn, before having to pause when government advice was again to work from home again.



citizens advice

Citizens

Advice drop in sessions at UTASS remained vital to the local community. Unfortunately due to

the Covid pandemic, fortnightly sessions which have historically taken place could not.

We worked alongside Citizens Advice to advertise that assistance was still available via telephone or email, with a dedicated telephone number and email address. We did manage to get a face to face session arranged before the end of 2021 and it is hoped, that this can continue in 2022.

‘**Out of Hours**’ assistance remains a vital Service; we’re available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year! We encourage those who don’t feel they can call to send a text or contact us anytime via our Facebook page or website.

96% of users say 24hr emergency contact is an important service.

Surgeries with our MP and Area Action Partnerships were suspended due to Covid restrictions, we hope to restart them soon, giving residents opportunity to have their voice heard. The facilities were also used by our local parish councils and other local groups for meetings, again giving residents the opportunity to feed into local organisations.

Bringing People Together

Ladies outings After restrictions eased we were delighted to be able to arrange 5 ladies outings. The first visit saw a return to the popular Lanchester Garden Centre followed by visits to Thornton Hall Gardens, and a lunch at the Langdon Beck Hotel.



In October the ladies thoroughly enjoyed a private tour around Ushaw College and just after Remembrance Sunday, they headed over to see “Tommy” at Seaham followed by fish and chips. Stalwart Sue Bainbridge was our volunteer driver for all the visits.



83%
of users say
that UTASS helps
them feel
less isolated

“ Thank you for all you do for us, arranging lunches and outings to places we would not get to, it is very much appreciated . ”

Doreen Collinson Resident

CREE monthly lunches

Very cautiously we restarted the farmer’s lunches in October 2021. Rosemary Thompson provided the wonderful food assisted by her daughter in law, Rosie, a much valued volunteer. The men were delighted to get together again for the craic.

The Christmas meal at St John’s Chapel was postponed a couple of times as the army were using the hall following the devastation left by Storm Arwen. The men commented that the meal was definitely worth waiting for.



Highlights Rural Touring Theatre



Despite national lockdowns we had great interest in our two highlights productions. In June the Clydebuilt Puppet Theatre brought their ‘Dinosaur Detectives’ show. It was a great hit with the children who came , and included a puppet workshop afterwards.

In November, Multi Story Theatre Company visited with their ‘Hefted’ production, a play by David Lane. Four actors conjured a score of characters between them, and tell the stories of the landscape and history of rural life.

Bringing People Together

Time Together Between January and October 2021 we provided a variety of free activities and events for women living/working on farms across the dale.

The first was a surprise 'Pamper Pack', which was very well received, at a time when many people were really starting to feel the long term effects of all the lockdowns. Next was a kit with everything the ladies needed to create a spring floral decorated willow wreath followed by a walk from



Bowlees over to Holwick for afternoon tea at the Farm House Kitchen.

In August we had a 'Revel in the Rostrum', which was an event the whole family could come and enjoy, a good excuse to get out and catch up with friends.

The final event in October was a 'Ladies Night' Rebecca Tiplady not only helped to organize the event, but also hosted the event. It gave everyone the opportunity to do some Christmas shopping and enjoy the gin bar with the free transport that was on offer!

The women involved appreciated being thought of and the excuse to get out and about to socialise after the many months spent isolating at home.

“ I just wanted to say a very big thank you to you all for the pamper pack. It came just at the right moment, I'd just spent 2 days harrowing so I'm sure the face mask will come in very useful. ”

Christine Bell
Member



“ It was a lovely night, great to see so many friends after such a long time. Thanks UTASS ladies for all your hard work organising it and to Rebecca Tiplady for her kind hospitality. ”

Carol Hunter
Member

Music & Memories Fortnightly sessions continued online or via dial-up right through until the end of September, when those who felt comfortable came back into UTASS to enjoy the singing in person, while others continued from home. In November, a lady from America, who had heard of our sessions through Mike Bettison, our ukulele player, came along to meet everyone while she was over in the UK.

At the Christmas session we saw more participants coming along in person, enjoying the festive songs and carols.

“ I really enjoy singing along and look forward to it. It gets us out of the house and its lovely to see everyone. ”

Frank Kidd
Member

68%
of users say
that social
isolation caused
stress

Bringing People Together

Wellness Walks

Susan Bainbridge, a local part-time first responder and volunteer, with the use of the UTASS minibus, arranged 10 trips for walks around places including Stanhope, Staindrop, Cow Green, Bowlees and Balder Head.

The group enjoy the ride out and also the variations of walks.



Brew Crew & Now

In May 2021, we partnered with TCR hub, Jack Drum Arts and Northern Heartlands to run a programme of free workshop and drop sessions known as 'NOW'.

The first few sessions were guided walks for families with young children.

Sessions then moved indoors to weekly drop in sessions. We have 53 registered participants who regularly came along and enjoyed the huge variety of artist led activities that have been available, including tai chi,

music, photography, wire sculpting and lantern making!

There has also been offsite trips enjoying local events including the 'Museum of the Moon' at Durham Cathedral.



“ I like going to the sessions at UTASS as there is no pressure, I don't need to sign up to anything, fill in forms if I don't want to and it's just easy going, we chat and do what we want – it's like a youth club for us oldies .”

Carol Scott
Resident

Lunch Deliveries

Throughout the year we have continued delivering weekly meals prepared by Karen Scott. We rely on volunteers to deliver the meals and they have all built up good relationships with the recipients, reporting any problems or concerns back to us to follow up.

4044
Main courses and desserts were delivered in 2021

Numbers have dropped from around 51 per week to an average of 26 as people regain their confidence. Anne also

“I look forward to the lunches, they make a lot of difference both mentally and physically.” **Derek LeMare**
Resident

continued to make weekly **Keep In Touch Calls** to the lunch recipients and other isolated members of the community.



Emotional Support

In the early months of the pandemic June (a retired mental health social worker and therapist) had supported clients on a voluntary basis. June joined the UTASS staff full time from May 2021 as a Community Resilience Worker with funding from the County Durham Covid Resilience Team to cover Teesdale and Weardale.



Linked with other voluntary sector partners throughout the county UTASS has been able to offer flexible support to clients whose wellbeing has been affected by the pandemic. Covid has had far reaching effects on the community- loss of livelihood, pressure of working from home and home- schooling children, longer term covid- linked respiratory illness, loneliness and the effects of the heightened fear from the threat of infection. As the usual sources of help were forced to resort to telephone and Zoom many people felt a deep loss of human contact. Going out to individuals over the past eight months we have been able to support people in finding their feet once again.

73%
of users said resuming routines after lockdown caused stress.

June has worked with individuals but also continued the popular yoga, mindfulness and relaxation classes which returned to face- to- face format in Autumn 2021. An additional group has met in Barnard Castle at the TCR Hub. Whilst we all hope that the worst of the pandemic is over the Resilience Service will be operating at least until early Summer 2023.

#In It Together



Shopping Deliveries

We continued throughout 2021 to provide weekly grocery shopping for isolated members. We use

two couples who have volunteered from the very start of the pandemic. The number of people using this service has reduced, however the remaining ones are very appreciative. Thanks too to the staff at the Co-op for all of their support.

“Enclosed is cheque for Utass to support future local help. To all staff, thank you for help with my shopping.”

Enid Linton
Resident

Prescription Deliveries

The much needed delivery service which was put in place last year by

local resident Diana Currie, at the height of the Covid outbreak was still a valued service to many local residents throughout 2021.

However with the lockdown rules/restrictions easing the demand was not as great, and the decision was made to reduce the deliveries to one day a week rather than two which is still a great benefit to residents unable to get out.

175
Shopping
deliveries were
carried out in
2021

76%

of users say that
UTASS helps them
to cope.

Here for you

When people were still unable to get out about due to lockdowns and Covid restrictions, we continued to try and help people have something positive to enjoy doing at home and something to look forward to.

Activity packs, including flower arranging, knitting, painting, drawing, colouring and card making were put together and delivered to people's doors once a week for six weeks.

In late summer we ran this again and provided packs to a new group of people across the Middleton area. We had some fantastic feedback from those who took part, telling

us how much they liked having a surprise pack to look forward to each week and having something different to try.

“Thank you for the packs... I used to do origami so I've got back into it since getting that one, I've been making little things again. I love painting so the extra top ups of paints and brushes have been great, as I use that kind of stuff anyway.”

Recipient



Working Together

Volunteers

70
volunteers
supported our
work in 2021

Our brilliant volunteers, young and old, have continued to be a huge help to UTASS throughout 2021, supporting us to deliver much more community activity than we would ever be able to achieve within our small staff team.

Our meal delivery volunteers alone, have contributed over 1200 hours of volunteer time throughout the year. Karen Scott from the Farmhouse Kitchen at Holwick has been fantastic, continuing to prepare two course meals every week, before they're delivered across Upper Teesdale and Weardale by a team of volunteers.

A number of volunteers have helped us with other tasks, including general office tasks, helping with community events and shows, packing up our Christmas cards and calendars and our volunteer mini bus drivers have helped transport



people to and from appointments and sessions when people have been unable to get there themselves. They have also helped us to take groups from the dale on day trips and visits.

Another important contribution are those people who perhaps don't see themselves as a volunteer, but do make a huge difference.

Volunteer time
during 2021 is
valued at
£66,000

They are the people who support us in different ways, those that help spread the word about what UTASS does both by word of mouth and on social media. Those that sponsor our cards, calendars and events. Those people that bring both ideas and concerns to help us get it right.

Thank you!

Whether you are a regular volunteer, a one-off helper, or someone waiting in the wings to help as and when they are needed, we say a huge THANK YOU you're amazing, we would not be the organisation that we are or be able to do what we do, without you!

If you would like to join us and get involved as a volunteer for 2022, we would love to hear from you.



Working Together

Oil Buying Group

Since UTASS took over the management in 2018, the scheme has gone from strength to strength.

We now have over 300 households/businesses in the Upper Dale benefitting from a discount ranging from 2.6p to 7p per litre.

Membership of the group is FREE.

Charlotte collates orders on a monthly basis. The majority of this is done via email, however for the 40 members without email access Charlotte makes contact via telephone calls. These are often appreciated as much as the monetary saving!

Our Oil Buying group saved it's members **£18,005** in 2021

“Thank you for managing this great service!”

Norman McBain Resident

Rural-Watch ‘WhatsApp’ Group

The group, the first of its kind in the area, was set up in 2018 as a response to localized crime, and it still continues to grow! Emma manages the group, day and night, keeping it on track and also shares information from other local groups now set up using our original model.

205 Members, 10% increase from 2020

Local police monitor the group providing them with live intelligence. This year again, on several occasions the actions of the groups have resulted positive outcomes, both in relation to crime and peoples welfare.

On one occasion members of the group tracked a stolen quad bike for 17 miles, the police had the bike recovered and arrests made within 28minutes.

Durham Constabulary admitted, had it not been the real-time updates our group members were making, there would be little chance of the vehicle being recovered, nor an arrest being made!



“Rural Watch is the most effective community initiative I have seen in my career, it reduces crime, catches criminals and gives communities increased confidence in rural policing .”

Superintendent Andrew Huddleston

National Police Chiefs Council lead for Plant and Agricultural Machinery theft



Rainbows

After a break of nearly 18 months 1st Upper Teesdale Rainbow were in a position where they could return to face-to-face meetings, however their usual meeting place wasn't re-opening, so we offered them use of UTASS in June 2021.

Working Together



The first meeting was a huge success with 15 girls attending, 3 returning girls and 12 new starters, the girls coming from both Middleton-in-Teesdale and Cotherstone Primary Schools, with leaders Sam Pickering and Megan Simmonds delivering the new Rainbow Programme which includes lots of badges and awards.

As a unit they like to be involved with the community around them. During 2021 activities included making Fairy doors and friendship rocks and putting them out around the village to decorate the Village in Bloom plant pots and the unit also attended the Remembrance service at the War Memorial.

We have three girls who have already earned their Bronze award, the rest of the unit is working hard and should catch them up early in 2022 with the plan to give every Rainbow the chance to achieve the Bronze, Silver and Gold award during their time in Rainbows

Beavers & Cubs

The future of the 1st Upper Teesdale

“ The use of the large room at UTASS has been a godsend. ”

Joe Simmonds

Beavers and Cubs unit was looking uncertain after they faced the same situation

as the Rainbows unit, with the Village Hall

not reopening. The 10 Beavers, aged 6 to 8 and 12 Cubs, aged 8-10, with a mix of boys and girls, meet every Friday during term time to play games, do crafts and earn badges.



Community Events

2021 saw the centenary of Middleton-in-Teesdale's War Memorial, and the working group from 2020 made sure that the display would be even better for the 100th celebration!

Two more silhouettes were added this year, a kneeling 'Tommy Soldier' and a grieving women.

Several keen ladies knitted and crocheted 600 poppies, which were then stitched together by an amazing ex-rocket scientist with mathematical accuracy before it was suspended from the tree in the memorial garden.



66%
of users say that
UTASS helps them
to join in with
things in their local
community

Working Together

Community Events

With the promise that the country wouldn't be plunged into a pre-Christmas lockdown like 2020, plans for the Christmas Lights Switch on were ramped up, alongside the return of the ever popular Middleton Mart Christmas Fair.

With many vulnerable and elderly residents still nervous to venture out, another gift, reminding those on their own, or struggling that the community is there and thinking of them was also planned. Instead of lanterns, this year, 120 miniature real Christmas trees were decorated with bright lights, and beautiful stars made by the nursery children at the local Primary school, and then delivered by volunteers, or by those who had nominated someone to receive one.



Following the success of the 'Door Step Santa Visits' last year, we were asked by the Christmas Lights committee if this could be a permanent feature, and they were as popular as ever!

76 Children were booked to have a doorstep visit from Santa on the eve of the Christmas Fair, there were 63 stall holders booked in to attend. The Village and the Mart were adorned with lights ready for the festive

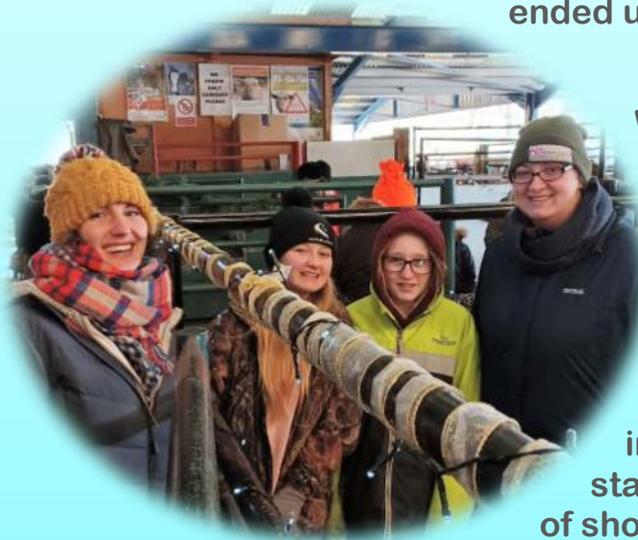
weekend, however the best laid plans were thrown into disarray when Storm Arwen battered the Dale. Volunteers battled snow and gales to make sure the Door Step visits still went ahead, however just a few hours later, the dale was cut off from the world, with a communication blackout and powercuts that ended up lasting weeks for some.



With no way of getting word out that Middleton's Festive plans would have to be put on hold, Emma made her way to the mart in case some of the 63 stall holders should manage to make it!

Remarkably, even being 'powerless' in more ways than one, the fair went ahead with 22 stallholders and just as surprisingly, a great number of shoppers!

83%
of users think
that Community
Events are an
important UTASS
service.



Working Together

Storm Arwen

In the aftermath of Storm Arwen, it became very evident that the area had faced some of the worst weather conditions that we have seen for many years!

The devastation of the network and the fact that the power outage went on for so long certainly frightened a lot of people, and reminded us of how reliant we are on electricity. It also proved that the use of coal actually saved lives that week!

Despite having no communications staff worked from home and did their best to check those who might need help.

Staff were not just staff, they were affected just as much as those who needed their help. Most are farmers and had stock to find, digging sheep out of snow drifts for days. Often putting themselves at risk to rescue their animals.

Isolated properties without a mains water supply had no water, as they rely upon bore holes, which need power.

The week following the storm was a busy one.

Once our power was restored at UTASS we opened our doors to those who needed a warm space whilst we visited vulnerable people to check in on them. We sourced and delivered emergency supplies and working with the local authority, hot food and drinks were arranged for people across the area.

Thanks to local farmers working with Northern

Power Grid, the

delivery of generators was speeded up, providing temporary power to households, some of which were without mains power for over 2 weeks.

We were reminded what a resilient area we live in, we saw such a fantastic amount of community activity going on; people helping their neighbours and those around them.

Going forwards, we are now working together with Durham County Council and others to see what we are able to do to further prepare for such events that may cause disruption into the future.



Young People

Initially 2021's activities were conducted "at a distance" with fortnightly home deliveries of activity packs and recipes with ingredients for families to enjoy together. Thanks to Morrison's for their donations of ingredients.

Our regular weekly sessions, Monday girls group and Thursday evening mixed groups were still postponed. We were all worried that this way of working would become normal.

1346

at home activities
were delivered in
2021



During April we worked with Investing in Children on an E-book via zoom. In reward for our young peoples participation they received £500 to spend on a celebration event and materials to use at the drop in.

In recognition of our longstanding association with Investing in Children, have achieved awards for over 10 years, we were rewarded with GOLD membership.

In May, as restrictions allowed, we managed to arrange some offsite activities at the Weardale Adventure Centre. The demand showed just how much this was needed.



“ We had the best time! The races were so exciting – I can't believe I've been canoeing and now know how to build a raft ! ”

“ Gutted we fell in, but it was mint! ”

Young People attending the event.

In June, we were pleased at last to be able to re-open our doors. Treading carefully to control exposure to Covid, initially to pre booked and limited capacity sessions.

Since that time we have attracted 18 new members.

Young People

Even though Carnival hadn't been able to go ahead, they still planned some low-key community events. We entered the village scarecrow competition – and WON 1st Prize! The young people opted for an 'Olympics' theme and celebrated our local team GB gymnast Amy Tinkler.



All offsite trips this year have been fully funded and included food for all participants. Since July, this has included visits to Rof 59, Hamsterly Forest, Go karting and Planet Leisure. Our annual Sailing trip at Grassholme reservoir was also able to take place, this is always a much talked about activity! The Young People were also invited to visit the Grassholme Observatory.



In December some of our young people volunteered their time to help decorate 120 Christmas trees to be delivered to lonely and vulnerable local residents, they also prepared chocolate truffles for The Pathway's Christmas lunch and created & designed their own Christmas cards for our meal recipients



Sadly, we said farewell to 4 longstanding members of our youth support work team Theo, Zelda, Lindsey and Jen this year, they are dearly missed by all!

As well as good-byes, we've also welcomed four new youth support team workers

Rebecca Melville
Yvonne Arkley-Bond
Jacqui Nutter
Tom Mitchell.

“ You are all an amazing team and our local children are so lucky to have you! Thank you for your dedication to our children. You've made the 6 weeks holidays extra special for them all and I think I can say for all the parents we are truly grateful! ”

Susan Pinkney
Parent

Training

In the first part of the year Covid prevented almost all training taking place. However we were able to hold the first training session at the end of May with a 'Taster Day' provided by Northumbria Dry Stone Walling Association.

The first course consisted of trainees from the same family which helped with complying with social distancing requirements. Further courses were held in July and October.

60% said UTASS has helped increase their knowledge & skills.



NPTC Safe Use of Pesticides course also ran in the summer, with Teesdale trainees accessing funds from Middleton Educational Foundation which supports young people, Weardale trainees who benefitted from funding from the Weardale Rural Skills project.

In June we ran an NPTC Safe Use of Sheep Dips, course, always popular, this training involves a classroom session in UTASS delivered by Fiona Lovatt & Bimeda with help from Richard Betton, followed by both an online and a practical assessment.



“ I attended the NPTC safe use of sheep dips in June last year. Following this I purchased a mobile sheep dipper and was able to offer a service to the local farming community.” “I was further helped by UTASS’s assistance in sourcing the funding for the course ”

Ben Sartin
Trainee



Training

Eight young people achieved the British Offroad Driving Association Quad bike certificate at a course which provides knowledge and skills in a variety of unfamiliar terrain.

Two people were assisted to pass their trailer test before the changes to regulations removed the requirement. Helen is pictured here proudly showing her certificate .



In June we held MiDAS minibus awareness training, including the accessible minibus element for 9 trainees some of whom were our regular volunteer drivers.

Some of these also went on to do a Outdoor First Aid or Emergency First Aid at Work with funding provided by Teesdale Action Partnership, this is another important and popular course.

“ It was a good course, very useful. The pivot steer machine was easier than I expected - it just took a little time. Its been of benefit in my current job and has improved my job opportunities by having the qualification. I now plan to do a 360 excavator course next. ”

Cameron Scott
Trainee

“ The training was really well delivered and very valuable. I'm so glad I had the opportunity to do the training as it really helped boost my confidence whilst towing a trailer . ”

Helen Bell
Trainee

We finished the year off with NPTC Rough Terrain Telescopic training, with assessments between Christmas and the New Year.



Many Thanks to our partners who enable our training endeavours.

Teesdale & Weardale Area Action Partnership
Barnard Castle NFU
Wellesley Trust
Middleton Education Foundation

Funders

THANK YOU!

Bridgepoint

 **NFU Mutual**


BALLINGER
CHARITABLE TRUST

 **THE BERNICIA FOUNDATION**


Durham
County Council

 **THE MERCERS' COMPANY**

Barbour


SIR JAMES KNOTT TRUST


Weardale Area Action Partnership


THE PRINCE OF WALES'S CHARITABLE FUND


NORTHERN HEARTLANDS
**OUR PAST
OUR FUTURE
OUR HOME**


COUNTY DURHAM COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

We have continued to receive amazing support throughout 2021 and every contribution, whether money, time or other donations is truly valued and helps us make a greater difference, through working together.

We have had support from many, including our Patrons, Trustees, staff, volunteers, members, Friends of UTASS, service users, funders, partners and supporters; we are so grateful for your help in providing services, support and activities across the Durham Dales throughout 2021.

To the many individuals and organisations who have supported us in various ways, we say a huge thank you to you all, including the following:

Ballinger Charitable Trust

Barbour

Barclays Bank

Bernicia Foundation

Bridgepoint

British Science Association

County Durham Clinical Commissioning Group

County Durham Community Foundation

Durham Community Action

Funders

Durham County Council

Hospital of God

HRH Prince of Wales

Joseph Strong Frazer Trust

NFU Mutual Office Barnard Castle

NFU Mutual Office North Durham Dales

Northern Heartlands

Pioneering Care Partnership

Ralph Gowland Trust

Sir James Knott Trust

Teesdale Area Action Partnership

Tesco Bags Of Help

The Frank and Phillis Scotto Trust Fund

The Mercers' Charitable Foundation

The National Lottery Community Fund

The Office of the Durham Police, Crime & Victim's Commissioner

The Prince's Countryside Fund

The R&H Woods Charitable Trust

Tyne & Wear Community Foundation

Virgin Money Foundation

Weardale Area Action Partnership



Our Staff

The UTASS staff are the heartblood of the organisation, without them we would just be a building and a name.

Each member of staff has their own speciality, but they all share one thing in common, a desire to help people with any problem that comes through the door. At one time these problems were largely agricultural but over time problems have become more diverse and the range of knowledge required expanded too!

Not every member of the team has all of the skills or knowledge required, but together its unusual for us not to find the right solution.



Anne Scott - Finance & Admin Support

Anne has worked at UTASS for 12 years and was previously a trustee. She lives on a tenanted Raby farm with her husband and 2 grown-up sons. She enjoys walking and taking photos in the local area and likes to fit in as many holidays as possible!



Bob Danby - Manager, Treasurer and Company Secretary

Bob became manager just over 4 years ago, but has been a trustee since 2001. He previously worked as a police officer and then latterly in leisure management.

He is married to a Teesdale farmer's daughter and spends his spare time doing DIY, mostly on his daughters house, to his wife's dismay!



Charlotte Fletcher - Admin Support

Charlotte has worked at UTASS as part of the Admin Support Team for over 6 years. She lives on a tenant farm in Upper Teesdale with her husband and two sons. In her spare time she enjoys socialising with friends, gardening, going for walks, attending music concerts and sampling a gin or two.....



Emma Spry - Social Media & Admin Support

Emma has worked at UTASS for 9 years, she also has a second job doing accounts for a building company where she has been for 19 years. Along with her husband and two daughters she holds a tenancy on a farm in Upper Teesdale, which takes up most spare time. Rare days off are enjoyed at concerts and music festivals.



Gina Richardson - Youth Support Team Leader & Community Engagement

Gina has worked at UTASS for over 13 years, starting as a volunteer 15 years ago. She now holds 2 part time roles working with and supporting all ages of our community. She "semi-retired" a few years ago to spend more time with family and friends.

Our Staff

Funding & Strategic Development - Grace Crawford

Having lived in Teesdale for much of her life, growing up in a farming family, Grace has spent her career working together with people across the North East, helping develop stronger communities. With three children, life is busy... Grace relaxes out walking, eating great food or chilling in a face-mask!



Training Coordinator - Julia Stephenson

Julia enjoys working at UTASS, particularly organising training and meeting people, especially when it all goes to plan!! Outside of work she likes to get out on the farm among the livestock, looking after some of her 4 pre-school Grandchildren, as well as supporting her elderly Mother, Yoga and exercise classes, all make her count her blessings!



Resilience Support - June Wainwright

June been working closely with a number of people. The support is flexible and tailored to the need. It has included helping people access services, recover from anxiety, depression, domestic violence, regain fitness after suffering covid and help managing the symptoms of post traumatic stress disorder.



Admin & Youth Support - Rebecca Melville

Becca joined UTASS in the summer of 2021 after previously working in ecology and then boarding education. Having grown up in Weardale, Becca was drawn back to the stunning Durham Dales where she enjoys spending her spare time exploring the hills.



Farmers Liaison - Richard Betton

Richard has worked at UTASS for far too long. He is getting more and more cantankerous and the staff are spending an increasing amount of time covering up his inability to manage his diary and IT illiteracy. Having said all that he does know quite a bit about all the different Defra schemes so we are not planning to pension him off just yet.

P.S. Richard wrote the above himself. The reality is Richard is our “elder statesman”, His knowledge and understanding of farming matters in incomparable We need to resist his retirement as long as we can, as we don’t know how he can be replaced.



Agricultural Secretary - Tessa Wigham

Tess is now enjoying her 20th year working at UTASS, she is also a member of the RPA Independent Appeals Panel and works for a Forestry Consultancy business too. She is a partner with husband John on a beef and sheep farm in North Cumbria so there is never a dull moment.



Our Trustees and Governance



Hon. Secretary

Mrs Louise Dalton
Farmer

UTASS is a registered charity and a company limited by guarantee. It is governed by a Memorandum and Articles of Association which were adopted in Dec 2006.

It is under the control of a board of 11 trustees, chosen from a variety of backgrounds and occupations to give a diverse skill set.

During 2021, 2 trustees resigned, Kay Hutchinson (April) and Jonathan Nainby-Luxmoore (June). Both trustees have provided invaluable service, Jonathan being an effective Chair for a number of years. Our heartfelt thanks to both.



Prof. Sarah Elton

Professor Durham University

During the year sadly Robyn Peat resigned as Vice Chair, but remained as a trustee. Thanks to Michael McGarry for stepping into his shoes.

All trustees are committed, with strong attendance at meetings, none take any expenses in relation to their support.



Kay Hutchinson

Fieldsperson & Farmer

Trustees are appointed by ordinary resolution in accordance with the articles of association.

Seven trustee meetings are scheduled per year with additional meetings where necessary. Eight, in addition to the AGM, were held in 2021. Initially these were remote but now have returned to face to face with the option to join remotely.



Vice Chair

Michael McGarry

Solicitor

There is a staffing sub-group consisting of Richard Matthews, Prof. Sarah Elton, Louise Dalton and Amanda Simpson. Other working groups are established for specific purposes, if and when required.

A full governance review was undertaken in 2020/21. Trustees were largely satisfied, though some areas were identified where slight improvement could be made.



Jonathan Nainby-

Luxmoore Retired G.P.

The most obvious was the recruitment, induction and retention of trustees. New procedures have been introduced which will include mentoring support for new trustees.

With a view to giving greater flexibility in the retention of trustees, changes to the Articles of Association will be put before the AGM in March 2022

Our Trustees and Finance

The UTASS Financial Policy outlines procedures and safeguards to ensure reasonable assurance against fraud or error and compliance with Charity Law

On a monthly basis Trustees are presented with information regarding spend, current /savings account balances and investment values.

In accordance with Charity Law, accounts are submitted for independent examination by a suitably qualified person

It is the policy of the trustees to hold free reserves for between 6 and 12 months normal activity (£160k-319k)

A summary of the financial position is shown below.

A full copy of the accounts is available both on the UTASS and Charity Commission's websites.

Financial Summary

For year ending 31st December 2020

Income	
Donations	£47,790
Grants	£138,232
Income from charitable activities	£193,806
Investment income	£2,089
	£381,917
Expenditure	
Staff costs	£202,488
Project costs	£51,308
Other costs	£65,254
Total	£319,050
Surplus for the year	£65,371
Assets and liabilities at 31st December 2020	
Fixed assets including investments	£58,021
Current assets including bank accounts	£346,517
Current liabilities	£20,321
Net assets	£384,217
Funds	
Restricted funds	£135,460
Reserves	£169,432
Other unrestricted funds	£92,457
Total funds	£384,217



Vice Chair

Mr Robyn Peat
Land Agent



Mr Roy Oxby

Retired Bank Official



Amanda Simpson
Farmer



Carl Stephenson
Farmer



Mr Ian Tallentire
Garage Proprietor

UPPER TEESDALE AGRICULTURAL SUPPORT SERVICES LTD (UTASS) REGISTERED OFFICE:

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Fax: 01833 640872

Email: info@utass.org

Website: www.utass.org

 **Facebook:** @UtassUpperTees

 **Twitter:** @UtassUpperTees

UTASS Objects/Mission Statement:

“To promote the benefit of the inhabitants of the community of the rural area of Upper Teesdale and the neighbourhood thereof through the advancement of education and the provision of facilities in the interest of the social welfare for the recreation and other leisure time occupation with the object of improving the conditions of life for the said inhabitants”.

UTASS Aim:

“UTASS works with and for the communities across the Durham Dales, helping people gain access to the services, advice and resources that they need so they feel supported, valued, happier and more able to cope ”

Registered Charity number: 1120120

Company Limited by Guarantee number: 06054331