



Annual Impact Report 2020

Upper Teesdale Agricultural Support Services



Introductions



The last year has seen unprecedented events that have turned the world upside down for all of us, and during these difficult times the role that UTASS has played in the local community has been more important than ever. I'm incredibly proud to be involved in such a vital and effective organisation.

It has been great to see how UTASS has risen to the challenges presented by the pandemic and continues to do what we do best: providing support to those who need it in rural Teesdale and Weardale. Adapting to a largely online working regime has meant a change to many of our normal activities, but the staff have been wonderfully resilient and have managed to keep all of our core services going, whilst offering extra support to those who are having to self isolate. UTASS has always provided an important service, but during the pandemic this has become a lifeline for many.

We have seen two changes to our staff: we were very sad to say goodbye to our joint Project Manager Diane Spark in August after many years of invaluable service, and we wish her all the very best in her new role with the Prince's Countryside Fund. We welcomed Grace Crawford as our Strategic Development Officer in February – UTASS is already benefitting from her wealth of experience and her dynamism.

The increased workload brought on by the pandemic has meant that we have been even more reliant on our volunteers than usual and it is to them, to our excellent Manager Bob Danby, our fantastic Staff, our Members, Funders, Patrons and Trustees that I offer my heartfelt thanks.

Here's to happier, healthier times.

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

Richard Matthews MA, MRCVS
Chair of UTASS
Veterinary Surgeon

Introductions

In 2019 I do not think anyone could have foreseen the problems we would face. The move to home working in March forced substantial changes to communication and procedures, and at the same time the needs of the community changed. Not only that, but they continued to change almost daily, as we tried to constantly adapt to meet those needs.

UTASS staff deserve unending praise, they willingly shouldered extra tasks and made the whole thing work. I have no hesitation in saying that without their "can do" attitude we would not have been able to accomplish what we have.

I feel privileged to work alongside them.

Many thanks too, to all the volunteers, without whom we could not have delivered our services, there are too many to mention individually, but the contribution made by each and everyone is vastly appreciated, not only by the staff and I, but also by the residents they help, week in, week out.

For 2021, we all look forward to a return to something more like normality. UTASS is ready for the new challenges it will undoubtedly bring. Not least among these, are the changes we are facing as a result of the Agriculture Transition Plan.

We look forwards to building upon the new relationships we have developed, and to do our very best for the people in the Durham Dales.

This is a new format for our annual report. In it we have tried to give a flavour of what we have done in 2020, I hope you like it.



Bob Danby CMgr MCMl
UTASS Manager
Company Secretary
Treasurer



Farming Support

Basic Payment Scheme The 2020 application window opened in mid March 2020 just before Covid 19 Lockdown was announced, anticipating issues we began preparing, checking maps in January. This coupled with the hard work in previous years made applications straightforward if there were no necessary amendments.

As a result we were able to complete the majority of BPS applications remotely without personal contact, and we finished in record time.

When the application window was extended we were concerned that payments in December would be delayed. However that did not happen and almost all of our members were paid on time.

Query forms have been submitted in respect of the few underpayments made and we continue to support members through the process.

Agricultural Secretary Tessa continued to support businesses with farm records, registration of calves, cattle and sheep movements.

Generally, Rural Payments Agency inspections ceased due to Covid 19 restrictions, and Farm Assurance inspections were carried out remotely via digital or online methods.

In 2020 there were a number of new farming businesses established.

Tessa has also assisted with initial registrations with a range of agencies, including the RPA, Health Agency, British Cattle Movement Service, and British Wool.

87%
of users say that
UTASS helps to
reduce stress



“When we took over the tenancy for Beck Foot in May/June we went to UTASS for help and advice on where to start. We were put in touch with Tessa who has helped us in the application process of securing the tenancy and throughout. She has sorted our Basic Payment Scheme application, changed over the names on the Environmental Stewardship Agreement, registered us with the RPA, Animal Health and BCMS and helped us establish our flock and herd numbers. She has also been the relations between ourselves and the previous tenant. Without the help of Tessa and UTASS we would not have known where to begin. Thank you all very much!”

Karl Borrowdale
Member

Farming Support

Grants & Countryside Stewardship Assistance

The two year Countryside Stewardship Hedgerow and Boundary Scheme was popular with members, for the first time some current Higher Level Stewardship agreements were permitted to apply.

Nearly all the applications were for stone wall restoration to a maximum of £10,000 per business.

Other grant applications were made for Countryside Productivity Small Grants Scheme, Mid Tier Stewardship and the Rural Development Programme for England's Growth Programme.



Graziers Groups All AGM's of the six supported Graziers' Groups were done by correspondence due to the Covid-19 restrictions.

Considerable effort was invested in negotiating a new agreement for Cotherstone Moor, after considerable difficulties obtaining an accurate application pack it was submitted in April 2020. This was followed by protracted negotiations, eventually resulting in an agreement (230 pages) going live on the 1st January 2021.

Well-established and functioning Graziers Groups may well be an important asset when the Government's ELM scheme is rolled out.

Briefings Were one of the few services largely unaffected by the pandemic, the aim is to translate complicated jargon into language the ordinary person can understand. We sent out eight briefings in 2020, covering a wide range of topics including various grant opportunities, Covid rules for auction marts etc.

In 2020 we experimented with video briefings which were very successful, reaching a wide audience. We hope to build on that success in 2021.

Providing a voice To make sure that decision makers understand the impact of their policies on the local farming community, UTASS

engages with organisations and representatives both locally and nationally, including our M.P., Natural England, Defra, RPA, North Pennine AONB, NFU, Farming Charities, church leaders as well as the press and media.

Our membership has **470** Farming households

A special mention should be made of the behind the scenes work of Richard Betton. Few realise how much support he provides to the most in need, A senior colleague at UTASS summed it up at a meeting with Public Health managers saying "I don't know of anyone who has done as much to improve mental health in the dales."

Bob Danby
UTASS Manager

£10.48
of social benefit for every £1 invested according to Future Farming Resilience Project Findings

Bringing People Together

The Theatre Group Were looking forward to 3 performances in 2020 at Sunderland Empire and Darlington Hippodrome; 90 tickets had been reserved.

Unfortunately these were all postponed due to the pandemic, however the theatregoers are all looking forward to the shows being rescheduled in 2021 and 2022.

CREE monthly lunches Prior to restrictions we were able to host lunches at Middleton Auction Mart, St John's Town Hall and Barnard Castle Auction Mart.

83%

of users say that UTASS helps them feel less isolated

When we could no longer do that our funders were very understanding and allowed us to use that funding to provide meals to support people in the community.

However we still keep in contact by telephone with most Cree members and they all agree how much they miss getting together and having the craic. Starting these again is our priority.

Ladies outings we were able to squeeze two between restrictions in 2020.

In January some ladies enjoyed a cinema trip to Darlington to see the film "1917", which was filmed in the area.

Another group took advantage of the "Eat out to help Out" scheme and had lunch at Langdon Beck in August.



"After lockdown to go to Langdon Beck Hotel was absolutely wonderful. To see people we hadn't seen for months and have a wonderful meal really lifted my spirits. My friends thought it was fantastic and so nice to actually get dressed up, having a ride out in the lovely countryside."

Hilda Cleasby
Resident

Highlights Rural Touring Theatre

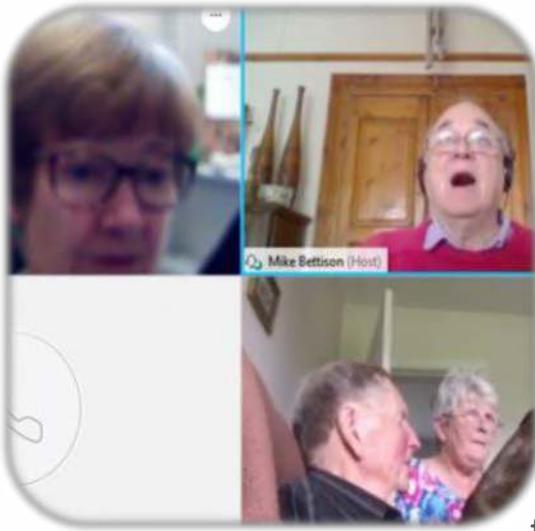
In February we hosted a production called 'Letters From the Front', by Glow Club, based on the book 'Thirty-odd Feet Below Belgium' by Arthur Stockwin. Sadly the second production of 'Little Grimm Tales' by Box Tale Soup, which was aimed at a younger audience was cancelled due to the pandemic.

For 2021 we have booked two productions 'Dinosaur Detectives' by Clydebuilt Puppet Theatre and 'Hefted' by Multi Story Theatre Company.

We can not proceed with the original dates in April due to the restrictions but we hope these can be re-scheduled for later in the year.



Bringing People Together

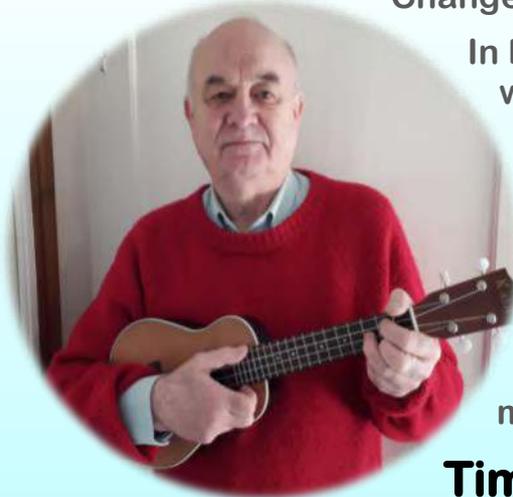


Music & Memories When we were no longer able to welcome into UTASS those attending for monthly sing along sessions, with the help of volunteers we found a solution.

From the middle of May to the end of August we were able to deliver fortnightly

Music & Memories sessions, still with Mike Bettison brilliantly leading the singing on his ukulele, but either online, or, for those not online, the opportunity to singalong by dialling in.

From September onwards monthly sessions resumed and in November we sang a very diverse repertoire of songs, as part of a project funded by the British Science Association on the theme of "Science and Change".



In December, we were joined by a local primary school who also performed their beautiful version of "Rocking Around the Christmas Tree" (complete with a description of how the children were dancing around the Hall during a piano only verse midway!).

“ We both enjoy it and joining in online helps to make up for not being able to attend the Singing for the Brain sessions we used to go to in Barnard Castle. We've known Mike for over 20 years!. The Alzheimers Society put us in touch with UTASS and we needed some help at first but now manage to get online OK. We look forward to seeing everyone every month and enjoy the varied good old songs. We also managed to log in to the Science Quiz one Friday evening, too, after it was mentioned at one of the Music & Memories sessions and enjoyed the interaction with younger people as my wife used to help at the village school and loved working with children. ”

**Joan & Brian
Whiteley**
Music & Memories
Participants

Time Together When we reviewed activities we provide, we felt more could be done with ladies “up’t dale” who due to isolation, family life, farming etc. often don’t find the time to socialise with each other. We had many ideas and were excited at the prospect of getting them together for some fun.

Covid restrictions meant that the plans for Flower demonstrations, gin tasting and outdoor cinemas etc. were not possible and we had to think anew.

We started with greetings cards to introduce the idea and find out what ladies wanted. The overwhelming response was they needed to get together, but until we can do that, we hope to bring a bit of cheer starting with pamper packs in 2021 encouraging some ‘time for yourself’.

72%
of users say
that social
isolation caused
stress

#In It Together

Covid Response As we saw the pandemic coming, we were already planning what help would be needed and how we could cope with the demand. We created our In It Together Teesdale Facebook group where we shared all information covid related for the community to access

which rapidly hit 1000 followers and enrolled 110 volunteers offering shopping, dog walking and everything in between.

“ Apart from the old Co-op, UTASS is the best and most useful organization that has ever been in Teesdale. ”

Desmond Collinson
Dalesman



Shopping Deliveries

Those shielding and isolating due to the virus were in need of shopping, and so, by using our volunteer database and working with the Co-op store in the village, our Shopping



Delivery service was able to flourish. Two

volunteering couples, so as to not break ‘one household’ mixing rules, purchase and deliver shopping every other week. The service has been used by some for just a short time whilst isolating, and by others on a regular basis right from the get go.

“ I can’t thank you all enough . I’ve been shielding right through and all the volunteers and everyone on the other end of the phone have been so charming and kind. I’ve admired Utass since we moved here and how essential it is for the local community. ”

Angela Williams
Resident

in helping us to get a successful delivery service for those in need of prescriptions. Working with our local surgery and pharmacy,

regular delivery of meds to residents right across the dale has become a

Prescription Deliveries

Local resident Diana Currie was instrumental

“ During COVID-19 the help from UTASS and their delivery volunteers has been invaluable. Shielded patients have received their medications safely and the workload and footfall in the chemist has been manageable. They have helped to keep Middleton COVID safe, it would have been a struggle without their assistance. Many thanks to all. ”

Angela Payne

914
Shopping deliveries were carried out in 2020

Over **250** prescriptions deliveries per month



necessity.

Lunch Deliveries

With many elderly and vulnerable people shielding, the idea of supporting them with weekly meals was suggested. Local resident and caterer Karen Scott kindly prepares and cooks the food at Middleton Mart, then volunteers deliver them on a weekly basis to 51 residents in Upper Teesdale and Weardale. Each recipient receives two main courses and desserts weekly.



Occasionally we delivered fish and chips, provided by two local fish & chip shops, recipients told us that either option was delicious.

No one would argue that the meals are not important, however the recipients tell us that they also look forward to their regular chats with Anne Scott, who makes weekly telephone calls to them all.

Keep In Touch Calls

In addition to the calls Anne makes to lunch recipients she is in regular contact with other isolated members of the community.



“ I moved to Middleton in 2019 not ever having met or known anyone. I rang Utass for a seat on the Age UK shopping trip and when lockdown came Utass stepped in and since then they have given a wonderful service to everyone, especially self-isolating people. The weekly meals are appetizing and something to look forward to. A grateful thank you to the volunteers and others who have helped, you cannot be faulted. I have had such care, it could not be bettered anywhere else . ”

Celia Pyne
Resident

Anne made
802
Calls during
2020

Emotional Support

One of our volunteers, June Wainwright, a qualified counsellor, helps our members with emotional support. Any of the UTASS staff can refer people to June, fast tracking them to this valuable and confidential service.

Our staff can also draw on June's experience to guide and advise them when delivering support to our members.

#In It Together

Fran's Face Masks

One of our appreciative lunch recipients, Fran Easby, wanted to repay UTASS back for her weekly lunches and found a perfect and unique way to do it!

Using material, once intended for curtains, she made face masks to raise funds for us.

The masks sold like hot cakes, with Anne Scott having to call to collect new batches every few days.

The masks were shared on our social media and were sent out country wide.

Being on sale right next to the Co-op also helped a lot of people caught short without their masks!



Over
£1000
raised

“Thank you so much for getting me started on Zoom and with your practice sessions. This has given me the confidence to sign up for my Art Society, Geography Group and U&3a sessions. In this lockdown it has made me feel that I am still alive. Thank you to UTASS members for opening up the organisation to the community beyond the farming fraternity as, like many others, I have benefitted from services like the Post Office, printing as well as feeling I can seek help if I have a problem. Everyone is so willing to help and approachable. UTASS is a treasure in our community.”

Joyce Jackson
Resident

IT Support

In lockdown a number of residents found that their activities had been moved online and unfortunately felt like they were missing out and made them feel more isolated during this already difficult period.

UTASS was approached by a number of people who due to a lack of confidence with online technology needed help and support. We were happy to assist and after weekly, 1-hour sessions these residents were confident enough to join online exercise classes, art courses and also see their family.

84%
of users say
that UTASS helps
them feel more
able to cope

Access to Services



Weekly Pilates sessions with Laura Bailey from Teesdale Physiotherapy remained very popular until they had to be put on hold in March. They will resume as soon as restrictions allow.



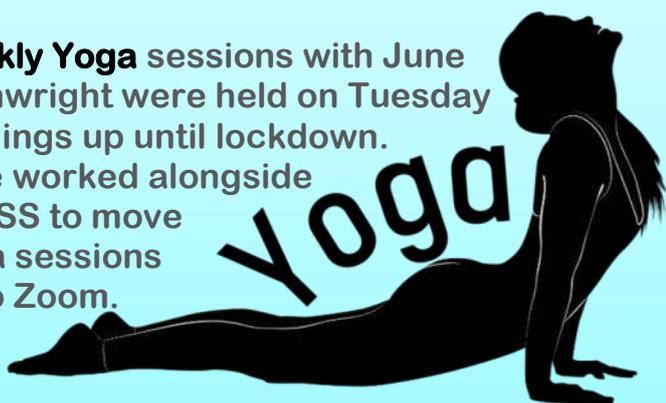
Durham County Carers support visited UTASS on a monthly basis during the first quarter of the year. They are an independent, charitable organisation who provide information, advice and support to carers in County Durham.

UTASS facilities are used regularly for **surgeries** with our MP, Parish Council and local police giving residents the opportunity to raise issues and concerns.

66%
of users say they feel they have a say on the services provided at UTASS

'Out of Hours' assistance is available 24 hours a day, days a week, 365 days a year thanks to our emergency phone number. We encourage those who don't feel they can call to send a text or contact us anytime via our Facebook page or website.

Weekly Yoga sessions with June Wainwright were held on Tuesday evenings up until lockdown. June worked alongside UTASS to move Yoga sessions on to Zoom.



citizens advice

Citizens Advice drop in sessions at UTASS are vital to the local community. Prior to the first lockdown of the Covid pandemic, sessions took place fortnightly. After which we collaborated with Citizens Advice to advertise that assistance was still available via telephone or email, with a dedicated telephone number and email address.

Rachel Logan Foot Health



Professional offers sessions every 6 weeks.

This is another service which had to be halted when the lockdown began and is a big miss to those who access it.

POST OFFICE

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

These sessions are vital for the rural community of Upper Teesdale.

Used **3804** times in 2020, saving **74,558** miles

Not to mention 74K less miles of emissions and less Covid spread.

“ It is a huge benefit to me having the Post Office in UTASS twice a week as I do a lot of online selling. If it wasn't for this service I would have to go to Barnard Castle. The Post Office service in UTASS is well run and friendly. ”

Julia Longstaff

Young People

2020 started as a normal year albeit with the prospect of the pandemic on the horizon.

Normal weekly sessions continued until the lockdown in March, a girls session on Mondays, and two mixed sessions on Thursdays

In February half term there was a “Cook your own Tea” event and an off site trip to the ever popular Rof59 activity centre.



In February the Glow Club held a free animation workshop. The young people who attended had great fun designing and creating their own carrier pigeons and map. Then illustration specialist Francis Lowe helped the children create an animation of the pigeons carrying messages across the ‘map’ to the ‘front’.

Just in the nick of time before lockdown, working with the British Science Association, we held a Family Science fair to mark British Science Week, open to everyone, young and old.



Our trustee, Professor Sarah Elton was instrumental in putting the event together, and it attracted many people who had never visited the building before.



There were many fun activities, each designed to introduce and illustrate scientific principals. For some reason, making volcanoes and bath bombs was very popular, with the young people.

“ UTASS is an outstanding example of how youth provision should be delivered and, as always, it is a pleasure to visit to meet with the young people and staff from the project to hear about the positive contribution young people make to the service. ”

Chris Affleck
Investing in Children

Young People

When Covid restrictions were imposed we had to develop a whole new way to keep contact and support our young people remotely.

One of the most successful ideas was delivering “Cook your Own Tea” to the young peoples homes.

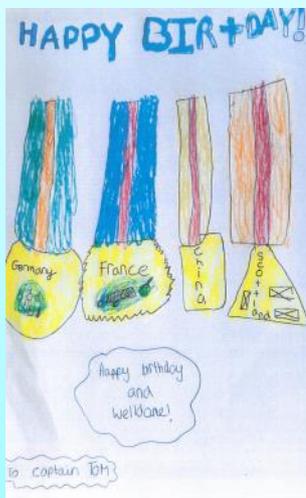
Healthy recipes were created (including a yoghurt based pizza dough that wowed even pizza connoisseurs), ingredients were sourced and the complete package delivered to the door.



A WhatsApp group was created, not only allowing the young people to share their experiences and show off photographs of their cooking skills, but also for the youth team to keep in contact with and support parents.

Delivering the packages also gave a much needed opportunity to maintain contact and support the young people and parents, being careful to act within the prevailing restrictions of course.

On the occasion of Captain



Toms birthday many of the young people made cards which were then

forwarded with good wishes.

“ UTASS really supported us during 2020. The CYOT programme was fantastic. It was something for Emily to look forward to and keep her occupied as well as teaching her cookery skills and independence. Sharing the pictures on the WhatsApp group helped to connect her with her friends and stopped her feeling quite so isolated. We also had some great meals! The regular activity packs were also something we made use of, using some of the suggested activities as well as the quizzes and puzzle pages. During October half term we braved the autumn weather to do the science trail, which was both challenging and fun. Everyone on the team has done their very best for the children of this area, for which Emily and I are really grateful. Thank you for all you have done ”

Angela Hancock
Parent

Young People

Quickly realizing that brother and sisters were being left out, we adapted the process to allow them to join in creating a family event

Activity packs were initially compiled in house and delivered with the meals. These were supplemented with packs from outside agencies, including Bowes Museum

In the summer holidays along with the meals, six, weekly, science themed activity packs were distributed.

“ Well what a year 2020 has been for us all but especially the kids! They have missed out on so much this last year and of course Connie missed UTASS loads. I am so thankful for you and your wonderful team, you have provided the kids with so many wonderful activities throughout the year which has kept them so busy and entertained. We tried the cook your own tea but with Connie only eating certain things she wasn't so keen but on those weeks you still made sure you dropped a little treat off for her.

Connie loved the science projects... especially the lava lamps and the family quizzes which entertained us all. Obviously with Connie having Autism and totally struggling to adjust to this new way of living you made sure that she was doing ok on a weekly basis and made sure she knew that UTASS were all still there for her even though the group was closed.

We are so lucky to have such a wonderful caring team within our community and really do think that 2020 would have been very hard and dull year without you all. ”

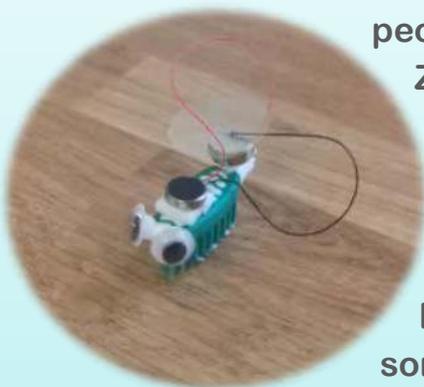
Kelly Manser
Parent

In the October school holidays activities became 'virtual'. Young people and members of the youth team joined live sessions on Zoom where Professor Sarah Elton talked through the activities.

One of the most popular (at least with the adults) were the (Ro)Bots created with a toothbrush head, watch battery, pager vibrating motor and some “googly” eyes.

Until you see them you will not believe how captivating these little creatures are!

A throw back to an earlier era, “Lava Lamps” were another popular project



Young People

In December the youth team and some of the young people worked with a number of community groups to deliver “Middleton’s Doorstep Switch on”

Amongst the activities and events, lanterns were decorated and gifted to deserving people nominated by community members, hopefully lifting both the giver and receiver.



Disappointingly Santa couldn't have his normal grotto, but with UTASS connections in the North Pole, arrangements were made for him to do home visits instead. After a quick briefing, Santa was able to astound and delight the children with his knowledge of them and their present requests.



Other activities in December included a Zoom session with Tina Robson from 'Refocus & Fly' to encourage thoughts about goals and ambitions and how to achieve them.

1014 Meal packs delivered to
50 Households since March

“ As a mother of 3 children ages 12, 8, and 4 lockdown was a difficult time trying to entertain and home school all of them as well as shielding myself and the youngest who has downs syndrome. Without the help and support from the youth team I think they would have been extremely bored and their mental health would have suffered. The activities through the science projects and cook your own tea not only helped keep them occupied but helped with the meals we were preparing, it gave them an insight into the time it takes to cook etc.

This service was brilliant and the team were great in keeping the spirits of people up in the community. ”

Brenda Toulson
Parent

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 285 households/businesses benefiting from a discount ranging from 2.6p and 5.7p per litre.

Membership of the group is FREE.

Charlotte collates orders once a month. The majority via email, however for those without email access Charlotte makes telephone calls to, which are appreciated as much as the monetary saving!

Our Oil Buying group saved it's members **£17,072** in 2020

“ I look forward to our monthly catch up on the phone, especially in these strange times it is lovely to have someone to talk to and put the world to rights! ”

Sylvia Edge
Resident

Litter Picking

During the easing of the first lockdown vast amounts of visitors flocked to the upper dale to enjoy the glorious weather at numerous beauty spots in the area, however whilst doing so they left behind substantial amounts of litter and damage.



UTASS received many phone calls and messages from local residents, who were understandably concerned & angry and asked what we could do as a community to stop this.



An appeal for volunteers on our 'In It Together' Facebook group, a volunteer task force of 18 residents, both young and old, was created alongside the North Pennines Partnership AONB. To coordinate the volunteers going forward a WhatsApp group was put together so that regular checks & clear ups could be orchestrated and this proved to be very beneficial during the height on the summer.

Rural-Watch 'WhatsApp' Group

The group, set up in 2018 continues to grow. Emma manages the group, keeping it on track and shares information from other local groups now set up using our original model.

187 Members,
26 % increase
fom 2019

The police monitor the group 20 hours a day, providing them with live intelligence, which on more than one occasion in 2020 has resulted in police making arrests.

The group also assisted the police in locating an elderly man who was lost, late at night, with a broken down car.

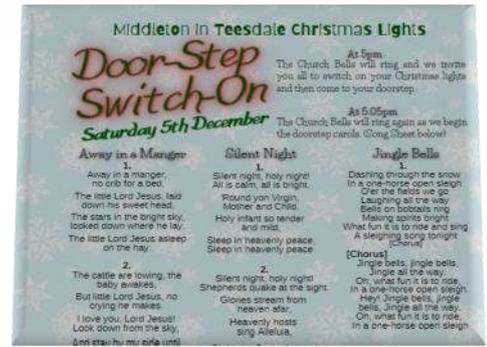


Working Together

Community Events

The Christmas Lights switch-on in Middleton-in-Teesdale is an important and hugely popular event. When the committee announced there wouldn't be an event due to Covid, UTASS worked with the community to pull together to make 'something' happen.

Working alongside the committee, parish councillors, county councillors and residents the 'Door-step Switch-on' came to fruition.



Fundraising took place to ensure the event could be a free event for the community.



After working to make our Annual Middleton Mart Christmas Fair Covid secure a 2nd lockdown for the area meant those plans had to be stopped, instead we created a virtual Christmas fair allowing the sellers booked to attend a platform to advertise their small businesses. Despite restrictions, a Facebook live video of the Christmas lights being switched on

11 Small businesses received **930** clicks with the virtual Christmas Fair

and carols from doorsteps could still happen, along with socially distanced door step visits from Santa (mentioned on Young People's pages).

The same working group also arranged for the cenotaph to be adorned with two 'Tommy soldier' silhouettes and lanterns which hung from hooks donated to the village by local business Middleton Forge.



Remembrance weekend was an extremely foggy one, which added to the display which received a lot of attention.

58% of users say that UTASS helps them to join in with things in their local community

Virtual Museum

A British Science Association Covid-19 Community Innovation grant allowed us to invite the community to contribute to a virtual museum. We collected photographs from people, young and old. People often say nothing ever changes in Teesdale, however the photographs in the museum show otherwise. Categories included 'Dales People', 'Weather', 'Landscapes' and 'Farm Life'. It showcases the stunning scenery, the unbelievable weather and the people of Teesdale, from 'haytime' in the 1930's to the present day. It was launched during our Zoom Quiz Night at the start of the October half term holiday.



Training

In 2020 Covid Restrictions had tremendous impact on the amount and type of training we were able to hold. Though initially, and for brief times in summer, we were able to deliver some face to face training, disappointingly we were unable to provide the range of training we would have liked.

83%
Members say
training is an
important
service

“ Nearly everything I learnt was new and helped me. CPR and Defib, I will use it if necessary, and on my CV for future jobs. ”

Young people
Drop in group

In February as a result of community feedback we held a paediatric first aid training course.

This was attended by a wide age range of local people and some of the young people from the drop in.



“ As a self employed Gardener, I jumped at the chance to extend skills I could offer. The standard of training was excellent compared with other training I’ve done and it opened my eyes up to hedgelaying opportunities in my current job and everywhere else! ”

Scott Nash
Gardener

Hedgelaying is an ancient skill dating back to before Roman Times. It is the process of bending and partially cutting (pleaching) through the stems of a line of shrubs or small

trees near ground level and arching the stems without breaking them, so they can grow horizontally and be intertwined.

The resulting barrier, which has been used as war defence in ancient times, fortunately is now only used to keep in livestock. We are pleased to be able to provide training in this ancient, but still relevant art.



Training

When all face to face training stopped we realised that online training could be beneficial to people isolated in lockdown both by gaining qualifications and giving them a purpose so we turned to identifying accessible and relevant courses. These were then added to our website and shared on social media.

As lockdown eased we were able to run some courses in mid summer.

In times gone by when drivers passed their test they were automatically qualified to tow trailers. That is not the case now and the lack of this important but expensive qualification can limit employment. Our funders enabled us to financially assist several people to gain this qualification expanding their employment prospects.



“ I am very grateful for the opportunity given to me (trailer test lessons). The knowledge and skills I have gained will allow me and my business to grow. I am now able to successfully expand my fencing part of the business as I can attend using my pickup and trailer.”

Thomas Ward
Trailer Training

“ My parents and Grandfather said they noticed we both had a different approach and we talked about what we'd learned with them as well. We were very pleased we were allowed to do more tractor jobs during haytime. ”

Thomas & Elliot Rigg
13-15 Tractor Training

Traditionally young people have always helped on the farm, but in order to do so safely in this mechanised age, training is provided for 13-15 year olds to operate tractors .

This year we have also helped people access car driving lessons, safe use of chainsaws and operation of telehandlers (shown right).



Many Thanks to our partners who enable our training endeavours.

Teesdale & Weardale Area Action Partnership
Durham Hedgerow Partnership
Wellesley Trust
Employability Durham
Durham Employment & Skills

Funders

THANK YOU!

Bridgepoint



County Durham
Clinical Commissioning Group



We would like to say a huge thank you to all of our Patrons, Trustees, staff, volunteers, members, Friends of UTASS, service users, funders, partners and supporters; indeed everyone who has helped us to provide our services throughout 2020.

We truly value each and every contribution, whether time, money or other donations and we absolutely could not do what we do without your support.

Thank you to all individuals and organisations who have helped fund our work including:



Ballinger Charitable Trust

Bernicia Foundation

Bridgepoint

British Science Association

BBC Children in Need

Community Foundation



County Durham Clinical Commissioning Group

County Durham Community Foundation



Funders

Digital Drive County Durham

Durham Community Action

Durham County Council

HRH Prince of Wales

Joseph Strong Frazer Trust

NFU Mutual Office Barnard Castle

NFU Mutual Office North Durham Dales

North Star Housing

Pioneering Care Partnership

Sir James Knott Trust

Teesdale Area Action Partnership

Tesco Bags Of Help

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

Virgin Money Foundation

Weardale Area Action Partnership



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.

All trustees are committed, with strong attendance at meetings.

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

New trustees have been provided with a welcome pack and an introduction to the organisation, however as a result of the ongoing governance review we are presently working to develop and improve this aspect.

Seven trustee meetings are scheduled per year with additional meetings where necessary.

In 2020 some meetings were cancelled as a result of the pandemic before being resumed using remote conferencing

There is a regular staffing sub-group consisting of the Chair, Vice Chair and Prof. Sarah Elton. Other working groups are established for specific purposes, as and when required.

At the present time the trustees are focused on two issues

- **Organisational Governance**
- The trustees are currently being supported by Durham Community Action to undergo a governance review, looking at what we do well and areas that we could improve upon to be more effective moving forward.
- **Organisational Sustainability**

In February Grace Crawford was appointed with the sole remit of developing our sustainability, her role has developed since that time but sustainability is still the dominant element.



Prof. Sarah Elton
Professor Durham University



Kay Hutchinson
Fieldsperson & Farmer



Michael McGarry
Solicitor



Jonathan Nainby-Luxmoore
Retired G.P.

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 3 and 6 months normal activity (£70k-140k)

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	£35,892
Grants	£189,805
Income from charitable activities	£149,291
Investment income	£2861
	£377,849
Expenditure	
Staff costs	£216,928
Project costs	£39,846
Other costs	£73,033
Total	£329,807
Surplus for the year	£48,042
Assets and liabilities at 31st December 2020	
Fixed assets including investments	£67,529
Current assets including bank accounts	£268,786
Current liabilities	£17,469
Net assets	£318,846
Funds	
Restricted funds	£124,691
Reserves	£101,698
Other unrestricted funds	£92,457
Total funds	£318,846



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:

9-11 Chapel Row, Middleton-in-Teesdale, Barnard Castle, County Durham, DL12 0SN

Telephone: 01833 641010

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