

ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT 2022



Upper
Teesdale
Agricultural
Support
Services





Introduction

It is with very great pleasure that I am able to present the Chairman's Report for 2023. This is my first report as Chairman following Richard Matthews handing over the baton to me last year. If any of us thought that 2022 would give UTASS time to dust our organisation down and recover from the trials and tribulations of the Pandemic, then we were quick to realise that a respite was not going to be available to us. If only!!

We sadly lost from UTASS, Yvonne Arkley, a Youth Support Worker and Community Resilience Worker, and Tessa Wigham as Agricultural Secretary, but UTASS has been bolstered by the appointment of Charlotte Fletcher who has stepped up to become our Agricultural Secretary and Adele Dickeson, Melanie Lee who have been appointed as Youth Support Workers and Amy Kinchley as Youth Support Assistant.

Caitlin Dent has joined as Receptionist/Administration Support and Melanie Lee has also expanded her role to include that of Community Resilience Worker.



At the end of April 2022, we had the privilege of meeting with the new CEO of the Prince's Countryside Fund and following a visit to Richard Betton's Farm and then lunch at UTASS's offices we were bowled over and delighted to learn that His Majesty The King (then as HRH The Prince of Wales) decided that UTASS should receive additional grant funding from the Prince's Countryside Fund over a three year period to be used towards staffing costs, but without the usual strings attached to some funding. We were told that this results from His Majesty's regard for our organisation and the work we do.

UTASS remains reliant upon grant funding, and this is always a challenge, but we (through Grace) rise to the challenge. It is notable that we have received grant funding again from several sources, but we cannot and do not rest on our laurels. As an organisation we also fundraise for ourselves, for example; we enjoyed another hugely successful Christmas Fair at the Mart, a now notable and eagerly awaited event.

I would like to think that those who benefit from the support and assistance provided by UTASS, might if they are able, give a little back. With this in mind for example local Solicitors have given their time to prepare Wills at no cost, on the basis that members and others who engage in this arrangement can make a donation in lieu of payment or leave a legacy to UTASS. It will be very much appreciated, particularly in these difficult times with costs continuing to increase and therefore the financial needs of UTASS and those we assist are growing.



Introduction

UTASS however does need to "spread the word" about what we do. Looking back over the past couple of years, I hope that the residents of the Upper Dales (Teesdale and Weardale) understand that while we have at heart our farmers, we are much broader in our scope; we look at all our residents and businesses, ready and willing and able to provide help where we reasonably can.

I have been particularly delighted that UTASS has been ahead of the curve and have been out into our community providing what information trickles out of government in the form of "Farming for the future", updating our members. I know this has been hugely effective in providing not only the most up to date and relevant information, but also the reassurances both as to what is likely to happen, and also to giving continued support.

We are all finding 2023 is proving to be equally challenging, but UTASS through our knowledgeable team are keeping abreast of the issues; be that relating to the cost-of-living problems, the continuing changes relating to the new farming landscape payments and regarding the day to day routine matters where we assist.

I cannot say how much I stand in awe of our staff and appreciate their skills, consideration and care. I thank them all on behalf of myself and my fellow Trustees and I am sure on behalf of all our fellow friends and members.



I was told when I became a Trustee that UTASS rose to challenges and did not turn anyone away. We find solutions or someone who can help. How true that sweeping statement is! These challenges keep on coming, but then so do the solutions or help to overcome them.

As I sign off, I do so with the optimism that whatever faces us over the next year, together, we are stronger and we face these together with determination and confidence.



Michael McGarry
UTASS Chairman

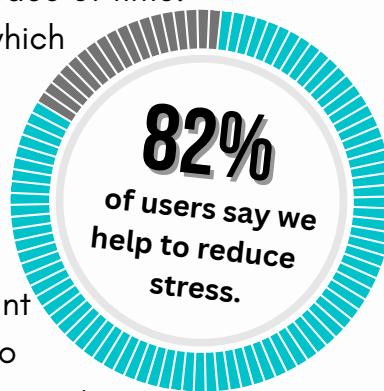
Farming Support



Our farm support team saw a huge change in May as UTASS wished Tessa a long and happy retirement after her many years of dedication supporting the farming community. However, it has provided an opportunity for us to practice what we preach in regard to succession planning... with Charlotte being willing and able to move into Tessa's role. To date Richard has been amazed at the depth of knowledge she has managed to acquire in a short space of time. Emma maintained her part in the team, dealing with farm support matters, which continues to ease the demands and pressure on Richard.

Our briefings

are a task that sit firmly at Richard's feet. Only a fraction of the agricultural information in the public domain is relevant to farmers in our area. Richard's skill to filter out irrelevant parts from complicated jargon-laden policy documents, and translate this into easily understood snippets is vital to ensure that the information our members receive is relevant to their farm business.



UTASS continued its work **providing a voice**. Participating in the DEFRA Charity Round Table and the RPA farmer welfare group helps us to be able to raise issues as well as enabling us to escalate individual problems on our member's behalf when we need to.



Richard was actively involved in the co-design and development of ELMS through his participation in working groups, covering everything from Rough Grazing and Moorland Standards to Guidance and better regulation, though progress was and remains difficult, and infuriatingly slow.

Richard remained a dedicated Council Member of the NFU on behalf of North Riding and Durham, receiving an NFU Meurig Raymond Award for his long-standing commitment. Whilst being a member of the Upland Forum, and the all-sector ELM working group, he continues to work with the North Pennine AONB Partnership, the Northern Upland Chain Local Nature Partnership and board member of the Tees Swale project... amongst many others. He battles frustration being the "token" farmer; often the lone voice putting across the farming view.

"We reside in a rural area, and have a wonderful and charitable organisation known as UTASS, the services they provide are second to none. The staff are very helpful no matter what problems they face. Farming is now living in a world where paperwork is getting more complex with rules and regulations changing. Our poultry are increasing in numbers, with Avian Flu creating problems but UTASS were great at helping us to sort them out, I remain yours respectfully."

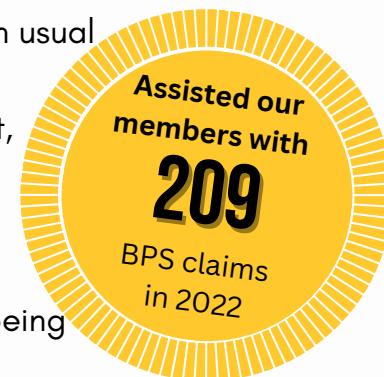
Peter Stubbs MBE, Member

UTASS takes every opportunity to engage with politicians and decision-makers to try and ensure the needs of our farming community are given fair consideration. It is often difficult to assess our achievements but if no one tries nothing will change.

Farming Support

BPS in 2022, with Emma and Charlotte helping, was far less stressful than usual though there were inevitably some problems with inaccurate mapping and missing fields. The RPA changed its payment regime from one annual payment, usually in December or January, by making interim payments to farmers in July and August. This was a welcomed help with farm cash flows given the rising costs hitting the industry, but the continued phasing out of BPS without the replacement (Sustainable Farming Incentive) being fully available in the uplands is an increasing source of worry.

2023 is planned to be the final year for BPS application as we know it (just when the software was actually working well) with payments being "de-linked" in 2024. Defra plans are to use the Rural Payments System to administer future schemes so accurate mapping will still be very important.



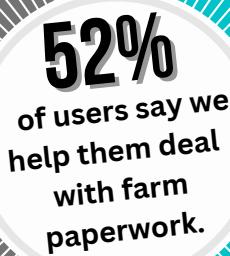
Grants assistance is a frequent support need for our members. Applications were a lot easier to manage than in previous years, due to the RPA introducing a rolling application window meaning there wasn't the extra pressure and workload during the BPS application window as there had been in the past.

Applications for the hedgerow and boundary scheme weren't as prevalent as in previous years due to members being unable to secure contractors to complete the work, as well as the rate the RPA offered per metre being considerably lower than the rate being charged by the contractor.

Other assistance included applications for the small productivity grant scheme, new Countryside Stewardship agreements as well as extensions to existing HLS and CS agreements. The latter caused considerable stress and worry for members as industrial action within Royal Mail and the RPA meant that many acceptance letters were delayed, or worse lost, resulting in letters and phone calls from the RPA and issues with their extensions being granted.

Agricultural secretary work supports our members with various tasks including farm record keeping. This could include registration of calves, cattle and sheep movements. Other tasks including

updating bank account details, farm assurance, planning applications, BCMS appeals and new farm registrations with a range of agencies including the RPA, APHA and BCMS, as well as capital grant claims.



The **graziers groups** have all successfully managed to hold AGMs this year after Covid caused disruptions in previous years. All Raby grazier groups will be signing up to 5 year extensions which will provide some welcome continuity in uncertain times. Cotherstone Moor has carried out some extensive bare peat restoration and "sympathetic tree planting" through its Countryside Stewardship agreement. There has also been a much-welcomed uplift in the Countryside Stewardship annual rates.

Farming Support



UTASS finished its first **Farm For The Future**



resilience programme in the spring. The environmental element of the delivery was severely hampered by the slippage by DEFRA in developing ELMS. However, there were still significant actions that farm businesses could take to prepare for the changes ahead, particularly in gaining a better understanding of costs and the opportunities that change can bring.

The programme gave our members access to some thought-provoking and challenging group sessions, Ian Cairns on farm business and Janet Fairclough on environmental opportunities, as well as some expert one-to-one support. Extra meetings requested by participants included diversification, carbon and succession planning.

In April, we were invited by HRH Prince Charles, now King Charles, to take some farmers, all of whom had been part of the Farm For The Future programme during 2021/2022 to meet with His Royal Highness during his public visit to officially open Darlington Farmers' Auction Mart.

His Royal Highness showed clear knowledge and understanding of the challenges the farming industry is currently facing and a genuine desire to help. He clearly enjoyed his conversation, as he was reluctant to leave for his next appointment.

The next round of resilience funding,



again coming through the Princes Countryside Fund, will be able to help new and previous participants to get the support that they need as the Agricultural Transition Plan starts to take effect.

Whilst the welcome meetings took place as scheduled in the Autumn, the programme of workshops and meetings were pushed back to early 2023, due to delays in DEFRA publishing key updates.

"Being part of Farm for the Future has been extremely informative and helpful. It is hard however not to mention the fact that we have been limited by the policies and information the government has provided."

Everything has been useful- the meetings, information, and sitting down to discuss things with Richard. It's good to be part of a group talking through these changes- useful to know you are not the only one facing this. It has helped me dig in and decide to take forward some business changes into the future.

I'd say UTASS is highly regarded and recommended, it's exceptionally well run and coordinated."

John Tallentire, Member

£10.25

of social benefit for every £1 invested, according to Future Farming Resilience Project findings.

Access to Services

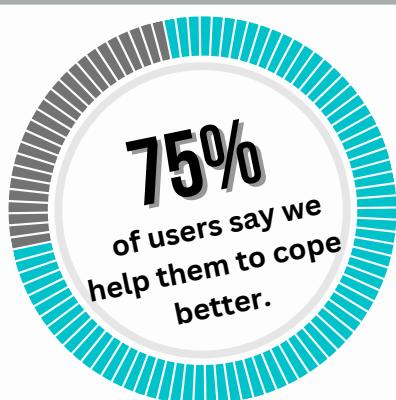
Citizens Advice

citizens advice

resumed monthly drop-in sessions which are vital for the local community, preventing them from having to travel 10, or even 20 miles. The main areas of enquiry during 2022 were for housing & benefits, debt, consumer and relationship/family advice. We're currently looking for volunteers to train as advisors, which will enable us to increase the frequency of sessions we currently offer.

"The help and advice from Citizens Advice has been a lifeline. My stress and anxiety rendered me feeling like a rabbit in the headlights when it came to completing forms relating to a PIP renewal claim. Carol helped me to navigate the forms, which thankfully had a positive outcome."

Citizens Advice Client



'Out of Hours' assistance

is one of our original and vital services; we're available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year! Whatever the time of day our emergency telephone number can be called, or texted, or quite often people get in touch via our website or social media pages.



®
POST
OFFICE

Post office

with usage up by over 30% this year. The twice-weekly sessions are run as a satellite branch of Barnard Castle post office. The environmental benefit is also huge, saving people from the dale making the 20 mile return journey to Barnard Castle.

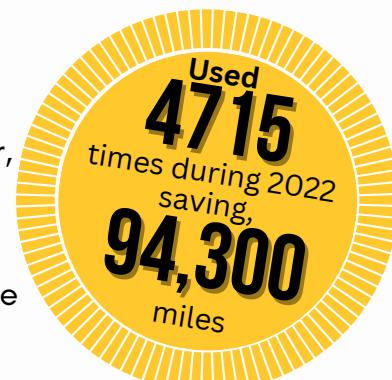
Surgeries could finally be restarted, giving residents the opportunity to have their voice heard. Our MP, Area Action Partnerships, and Police all held either drop-in or appointment based sessions at UTASS during the year, giving local residents the opportunity to feed into local organisations.

Durham County Carers Support

is an independant charitable organisation who we work closely with. We refer members within County Durham who are carers to enable them to receive support and advice, while their local coordinator runs coffee mornings here at UTASS for local carers.

Yoga & Pilates

sessions were able to return to face-to-face sessions in 2022. A weekly pilates session is run by Laura, a local physiotherapist. Our weekly yoga sessions have been incredibly popular, with long-standing attendees being joined by new people! So many so, and with the help of Jude, we were able to offer an additional weekly yoga class.





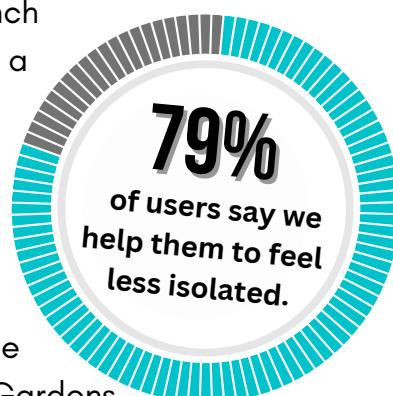
Bringing People Together

This year saw the **CREE monthly lunches** resume as normal after an unpredictable couple of years. Middleton, St John's Chapel and Barnard Castle have all been well attended, attracting a few new members!



Rosemary Thompson has again provided the delicious food, helped by her daughter-in-law, and much valued and appreciated volunteer, Rosie.

For the first time ever, the three groups were brought together for a joint Christmas lunch held at Langdon Beck Hotel. It was a roaring success, everyone had a thoroughly enjoyable afternoon, with some catching up with friends they hadn't seen for over twenty years!



We managed seven **ladies outings** this year, taking trips to the Bowes Museum, Thornton Hall Gardens, Thorpe Farm and Mainsgill.



There was an unexpected bonus on offer at the Bowes Museum as unbeknown to the ladies, filming was taking place for the 'Travelling Auctioneers'. They were able to get their photo taken with the presenters and enjoyed the show when it aired on BBC One later in the year.

"It was just super, the acting and the whole production. It was truly enjoyable, everything was perfect."

**Celia Pyne,
Resident**

We held two **theatre trips** in the summer; in July we had an enjoyable evening at the Sunderland Empire seeing Mamma Mia... again! It's a popular request whenever the 'Smash Hit Musical' is touring locally. Later, in September, we went to the Durham Gala Theatre to see an excellent production of 'Brassed Off' after enjoying a delicious lunch.

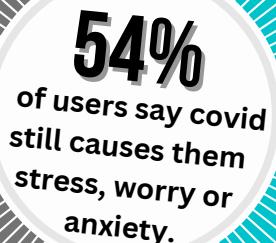


"UTASS do a fantastic job, the little presents they all received at Christmas were a nice touch and well thought out."
**Mrs Bell,
Weardale**

Bringing People Together

Monthly **music and memories** sessions, led by Mike Bettison playing his ukulele, took place in UTASS throughout the year, the option to join online or via telephone is still available and still is being used.

With the help of a volunteer driver and our minibus, we have provided transport for residents from a local care home to come along to join the session since October. At one session the group reminisced back to the days of the Middleton Male Voice Choir, which one of our regular attendees was a member of. We talked about all the concerts they would perform and listened to a rendition of "Sweet Vale of the Tees" on YouTube.



"I enjoy the company and the good humour and Mike's lively playing. The repertoire of songs can transport you from Tyneside to The States. It's good to have a reminder of a lot of old songs that you have really forgotten about. It boosts your spirits, bringing back happy memories and of the good old days."

Colin Cleasby



Our weekly **wellness walks** are designed to suit anyone and help people to get out and about, and meet others whilst enjoying fresh air and getting some steps in, while a shorter route is always available for those who are looking for a more gentle pace.

Sue Bainbridge, a local part-time first responder, and Wendy Stafekis, are both volunteer walk leaders.

With the use of the UTASS minibus, the group often travel further afield. This year they have explored the Middleton in Teesdale area, as well as trips to Bowlees, Stanhope and Cow Green.



Bringing People Together



YOU ARE INVITED TO JOIN US AT
UTASS
OPEN TO ALL

**FREE PIE
AND PEAS**

Every Monday (excluding bank holidays)
11am - 12.30pm

Join us and meet friends old and new for an early lunch with some dominoes and other games - play if you want to, no pressure!

There's no need to book but if you would like to let us know you are coming, please call the UTASS office on 01833 641010

Happiness Hubs Fund

cree COUNTY DURHAM

Our **pie and peas** session is a weekly session open to all.

A welcoming warm space makes for a great opportunity to meet up with friends or make new ones whilst enjoying a range of 'table' games. The game of choice is more often than not dominoes, however there are cards, chess, draughts and other games available to enjoy followed by a hot lunch and a cuppa.

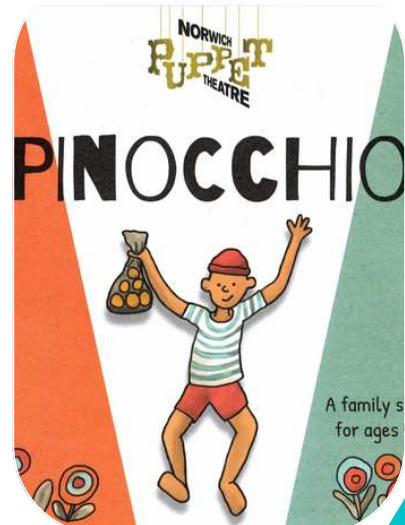
It's another session which people can pop along to without prior booking – The more the merrier!

"It's good company, a friendly group - everyone feels welcome. It's a hot meal and an activity to break up the day. John who comes regularly just makes you laugh and lifts your spirits - we have a trip down memory lane with his stories every week."

Doreen Collinson, Resident

Highlights is a touring scheme that brings an affordable programme of theatre, for all ages, to rural communities such as ours.

During the Easter school holidays, the Norwich Puppet Theatre company brought their production of the classic Italian fairytale, Pinocchio to UTASS and entertained over 35 children and adults, alike. The performance had the children spellbound, and the opportunity to 'meet' the puppets up close afterwards was a big hit!



Bringing People Together

Chat & Craft

evolved from the NOW project, which was a joint initiative with a group of local community organisations. The weekly sessions are led and supported by Gina. In 2021, the NOW project had a register of 53 participants, however during 2022, Chat & Craft had over 90 participants come along as and when they are able, which Gina is very proud of! This session is the highlight of her working week at UTASS.

90
participants
attended
Chat & Craft
sessions in
2022.

The popular session has attracted many from our local community, but also attracting people from lower parts of Teesdale such as Staindrop and Barnard Castle, Alston in Cumbria, and from our neighbouring Weardale.

On average we had 17 weekly participants – all enjoying meeting new faces, catching up with regulars, learning something new, helping produce community artworks, all the while boosting self-confidence.

Throughout the year sessions have often been led by local artists, these have allowed the group to try their hands at crafts such as pottery, felt landscapes, felt gong making and silk scarf painting to themed window displays, glass painting, proddy mat making, and Christmas centrepiece arranging, to name but a few.



All of the above, and more, has been on offer along with a cuppa, some cake and a warm welcome.

These sessions have allowed Gina to forge a trusted bond with those who come along, and have led to her supporting many members in other ways. This has included helping them with housing and police issues, NHS assistance and mobility aids to help arrange a plumber or referrals to other services they need or simply someone to talk to.

Fellow youth worker Jacqui Nutter and Jackie Gregory

both volunteered their time with continued support and laughter over the past year and look forward to more exciting activities in 2023.



"The sessions have encouraged us to join other groups, expanding our abilities and confidence. We feel we are in a lot better place mentally than during Covid because of the sessions and the people in them. We love how we can just walk to the venue - keeping our independence - it's very important to us both. The Chat and Craft group session has brought people out of their shell and it's all good fun."

**Carol Oulton & Doreen Collinson,
Residents**



Supporting People

Thankfully, the pandemic is now behind us and life is back to somewhat 'normal', however, the **Resilience Service** continues to be much needed as the community is faced with more stress as regards to increasing costs in heating, transport, rent, animal feeds, and fertilisers.

Whilst UTASS has always prided itself in helping people with both practical and emotional concerns, the funding available for a Resilience Worker has formalised our role in offering emotional and wellbeing support.

Our Community Resilience Service is aligned with the UTASS ethos, addressing the pressures of rural living as part of a county-wide service with professional support. The remit has been broad enough to allow us to work not only with people affected by Covid, but also with those experiencing bereavement, the effects of enforced isolation, financial difficulties, and also those suffering with anxiety and depression.

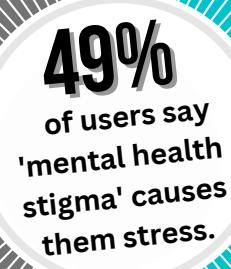
While many existing services had become pressurised with long waiting times, UTASS were able to respond quickly, supporting individuals ourselves, or seeking the help of other professionals where needed.

In the summer June reduced her hours and we were later delighted to welcome Melanie, a local farmer and trained counsellor to the team. The resilience team work closely with other UTASS staff and volunteers, to offer support with depression, loss, anxiety and stress.



Some research carried out by the psychology team with the wider Durham Resilience Service found that our yoga and relaxation had made a significant contribution to physical and emotional wellbeing.

In addition to working on an individual basis with Resilience Support clients, June recognised that there were aspects of yoga practice that might help people with Long Covid. There is a small group which now meets on a Thursday afternoon focussing on slow movement, breathing and relaxation.



Also, we have been able to offer some Introduction to Mindfulness sessions and June has been offering occasional support to those wishing to continue this practice.



Supporting People

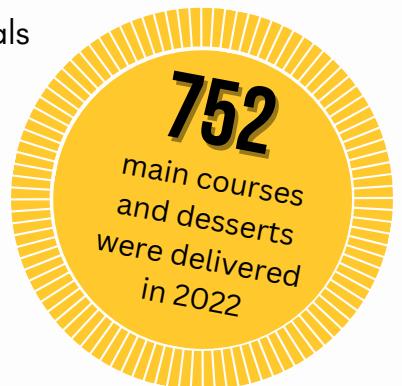


As 2022 started, the weekly **meal deliveries** were still a much-needed service for many.

Karen Scott continued to prepare the meals every week and we continued to work closely with volunteers to ensure the meals were delivered.

The demand began to reduce, as people continued to gain confidence in resuming normal activities after the pandemic.

Meals were delivered for the last time on 22nd June.



"I would like to say a huge thanks for asking me to do this for you, I've really enjoyed helping to look after these folks during COVID. Being able to carry on doing something resembling normality during lockdowns really helped my sanity. What the UTASS team have done for the community over the last 2 years has been truly amazing and I feel so glad I could play a small part in helping you do this."

Karen Scott , Farm House Kitchen



Weekly grocery **shopping deliveries** continued as they were another service which remained vital for some.



Two volunteering couples, Sally and Martin McCollin and Penny and Roger Sunderland have worked an alternative weekly rota to deliver shopping since the very start of the pandemic.

As 'normality' resumed, the demand for deliveries lessened and came to an end in September.



A massive giving so much of their free time to enable us to carry out these much appreciated services.

must go to our volunteers for



Working Together

Throughout the year, **volunteers** have once again played a huge part in helping us to achieve fantastic things here in the dales- far more than we would have been able to through our small staff team.

Volunteers have helped us with many things; running events and activity sessions, planning activities and making doorstep deliveries, minibus driving to help people travel to activities and medical appointments and support with admin tasks.

Volunteer time during 2022 is valued at

£67,780

We were delighted to support local groups of volunteers to arrange celebrations for the Platinum Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II and Middleton's Christmas lights switch on in 2022, events that were so successful and important in helping local people to come together to celebrate.

88
volunteers
supported our
work
in 2022.

Through our drop-in sessions at the beginning of the year, we encouraged young people to think about volunteering and why it's important and supported them to put some of their time towards community projects.

Our trustees are of course all volunteers who are vital to UTASS- generously giving their time to oversee our work and help guide activity into the future.

We continue to have a number of people who support us behind the scenes- sharing information on what is available through UTASS, ready to guide people in our direction as and when they need us and willing to share ideas and concerns with us when the time is right.



Volunteers are a huge part of the UTASS family and we are so grateful for all of the time, energy and enthusiasm you are able to share with us; we say a heartfelt

thank you  to you all and very much

look forward to working together with you into the future!



If you would like to get involved as a volunteer, do get in touch; we would love to hear from you.

Rural-Watch group

Our **Rural-Watch group** has yet again continued to expand-
The WhatsApp group was the first of it's kind in the area, when it was set up back in 2018 following a response to a spate of targeted localised crime.

The group, set up and managed by Emma, **UTASS Rural-Watch** Residents & Police working together has since been replicated and adopted by various Rural-Watch groups (formally known as FarmWatch), which Emma is also a member of, enabling her to share information succinctly and ensuring all members across the various groups receive relevant information and updates.

Reactions and sightings from members of the group have again resulted in stolen property being recovered and criminals arrested. The group's actions help to keep our communities feeling safer and endeavours to make them look less attractive areas to criminals.

"I am delighted that over the past year we've seen Rural-Watch, again, go from strength to strength.

Without the communities coming together to help us tackle and target rural crime and criminals we would not have achieved the results we have.

The successes of our WhatsApp forums are the envy of neighbouring policing teams "

Inspector Ed Turner, Durham Constabulary



Utass are pleased to be associated with and to support **Teesdale & Weardale RuralWatch**, having struggled to open up their own community bank account they benefit from using ours.
This also assists them in applying for various funding streams.

They also use the building as a central location to hold their Annual General Meeting of members as well as regular trustee meetings.

"We appreciate the support of UTASS. We use their premises for our AGM & Trustees meetings and are assisting our finances through their bank account. UTASS has been a really helpful partner to our group. Thankyou."

Clement O'Donovan,
Vice-Chair of Teesdale and Weardale RuralWatch



Working Together

1st Middleton-in-Teesdale Scout Group

have been using UTASS since 2021, after the village hall, their previous meeting place, failed to reopen after Covid.

They currently have 8 Beavers in their youngest group who are between 6 and 8 years old. They have 16 Cubs who are aged between 8 and 10 and our Scout group has 8 children in who are 10 to 14.

In the last year the groups have taken part in all sorts of activities, from traditional scouting skills like navigating and pioneering, as well as crafts and games. All three groups also took part in the Plants on the Edge art and ecology project with Northern Heartlands and North Pennines AONB, which involved working with a local artist to create work for display at the Witham.

1st Upper Teesdale Rainbows

also use the UTASS building due to the same reason as the Scout group.

They now have 10 girls attending the weekly Rainbows session, this is slightly down on last year as a lot of girls have sadly left when they turned seven, when they traditionally move on to Brownies.

In September Rainbow guides were able to take girls from 4 years of age, rather than the norm of 5 years old and have had a couple of new four year old starters. The girls seem to work very well together and are enjoying the Rainbows programme.

At Christmas, they attended a special Guiding showing of the musical Matilda at The Station Cinema at Richmond. It was a district event which over 120 Rainbows, Brownies, and Guides attended.



Let's Learn Moor

is the UK's largest upland outdoor classroom which runs annually in July across nine venues. In 2022 it saw more than 2,000 primary school children visit their local moor to learn from those who work to preserve it.

Becca & Emma were asked to attend our local event where they met 350 children across two days. It was an opportunity to 'plant the seeds' in the young, and those who educate them about the importance of farming in the uplands, carbon storage in permanent grassland and get them to think about what the landscape would look like without the animals that live there and without the farmers looking after it!



Working Together

Platinum Jubilee

in early 2022 UTASS called an open meeting to discuss how

Upper Teesdale could commemorate the Platinum Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II.

From that meeting a committee was formed and plans commenced!



With funding from County Durham Community Foundations Lets Create Jubilee Fund, and County Durham Community Foundation, Steve Messam was commissioned to construct a jubilee arch dressed with local wool to create a unique structure inspired by our farming heritage and also to highlight the much lower value of wool today.

Numerous groups including local school children helped in its construction and the structure stood for just over two weeks in the fields next to Low Force attracting both positive and negative views.

The main event of the celebration took place at The school and was the result of collaboration between many groups from the village.

Over 300 people attended the Garden Party, and for once the English weather was kind, though not hot we were spared rain. The festivities saw everyone given an afternoon tea box with entertainment provided by Middleton and Teesdale Silver Band and Alltogether Choir.

Face painting, bouncy castles, a soft play area and giant games were among the entertainment for children.

A "royal" photo booth enabled visual mementos of the day.



In the evening, the celebrations moved to the Sports and Social club for live music to dance the night away.

To give today's generation a feel of the decade in which the coronation took place, a Rock'n'Roll dance class was arranged prior to a 50's night with music of the era.

Working Together



Working together with the Middleton Christmas Lights Committee 2022 saw the 10th incarnation of the **Middleton Mart Christmas Fair**, over 60 stallholders attended bringing a wide range of goods including many delicious foods.

The good weather encouraged higher than usual attendance, and visitors were met with the tempting smell of bacon butties cooked and served by Middleton Scouts as they entered.

The feedback from stallholders and people attending was very positive and as a result we are likely to see slightly longer opening in 2023.

Several additions were made including Santa's Sleigh, a photo opportunity for young and old, including the local police!



"As a first-time stall holder at the UTASS Christmas Fair, I found Emma to be incredibly helpful with explaining the required documents required in order to attend and with the information that was sent to me prior to the day of the Christmas Fair. On the day itself the venue was immaculate, and the pens well thought out and most importantly the event well attended, so for me it was a worthwhile fair to visit with my small business and one I would look to return to in the future."

Anna Potter, Pom Pom Parade

Middleton Christmas Lights

This was followed by the Switch On on the car park. As this was the first time restrictions had allowed this to happen for three years, the honour of turning the lights on fell not to one but three carnival queens!

Mulled wine was drunk, mince pies were eaten, carols were sung and the Grand Christmas draw

was drawn!

"The Christmas lights group have been raising money to buy, maintain, put up and take down the festive lights around the village for many years.

The last few years have seen some of the members of the committee retire and new health and safety legislation be implemented resulting in fresh challenges. UTASS have assisted us in numerous ways over a challenging period and made a huge difference to us.

**I would like to highlight the exceptional work done by Emma Spry who has been on hand to do whatever was needed, going above and beyond every single time and always with a smile.
So a big thank you to Emma and UTASS."**

**Christine Gilbert,
Chair of Middleton-in-Teesdale Christmas Lights**

Amazingly the following week the committee were able to persuade Santa to visit children at their homes with a small present and a few kind words.

**Many Thanks to all
who made it
possible.**

Working Together

2022 started off as any other year for the **oil buying group**, unfortunately, the war in Ukraine in February led to months of stress and anxiety for members as well as our supplier.



The uncertainty of supply and the huge price increase caused panic buying, delivery delays along with a cap on the quantity of oil members were able to order, with no order at all possible in April due to issues with supply. Thankfully, towards the end of the year we saw the price begin to fall.

Even through this turbulent time, the group continued to grow, with 50 new members joining the scheme throughout the year – with over 350 households and businesses benefitting from the discount which ranges from 2.7p to 7.9p per litre.

"I really appreciate the oil ordering service delivered by UTASS."

Alan Thompson, resident

The **Friends of St. Mary's Church** is another group that UTASS were happy to support.

St Mary's Church in Middleton-in-Teesdale has been closed due to serious issues with dry rot in the floor. The Parochial Church Council (PCC) realised they were unable to refurbish and maintain the church, so reached out to the Churches

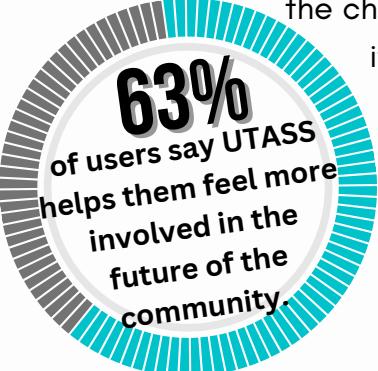
Conservation Trust (CCT) who arranged several drop-in sessions at UTASS, and other local venues to consult with the community about the future of the Church.



From these sessions, the Friends of St Mary's Church committee was formed and they are now actively fundraising to repair the building to a useable state.

With encouragement from the CCT, the PCC voted to convert the church into a festival church, meaning

it could hold various services such as weddings and Christmas celebrations, as well as being used for community activities.





Young People

This year has seen the **Young People's** sessions make a return to normality, with a full year of face-to-face and engaging youth-led sessions. A change to times, age range, and accessibility have allowed the sessions to be more inclusive, having gained 27 new youth members.

Mixed sessions took place on both Mondays and Thursdays, 6-8pm with both proving popular, we even had a record of 46 young people in attendance at one of the Thursday sessions!

Sessions are based around the 5 ways to wellbeing, promoting a wholesome lifestyle:



This year, a total of fourteen fully-funded offsite activities took place. These started in the Easter Holidays with a trip to Hamsterley Forest in partnership with Tees-Swale, making the most of the play parks, nature walk and den building.

In keeping with the Easter theme was a

trip to Eggleston

Abbey for an

Easter egg hunt

a few days later. Following an already jam-packed week was a trip to ROF 59 for ninety minutes of bouncing and climbing before tucking into lunch at the March Hare.

May half-term included a trip to High Force and

Bowlees to take part in geology activities, lunch and campfire cooking, all guided by Raby Ranger Andy.



In the summer holidays, trips got off to a quick start, the Centre4Life at Newcastle being a firm favourite, partnered with Durham County Council's Fun and Food Team. Further trips included returning to Hamsterley Forest and ROF 59 in addition to 4motion Skate Park and Go Karting!



"My daughter loves the youth group drop-in sessions, they give her a safe environment to be more independent and make new friends, it's absolutely fantastic, she also loves the activities during the holidays, they really help to break the boredom. Thanks."

Gillian Robinson, Parent

Young People



Summer holiday fun continued with our annual sailing trip at Grassholme reservoir. As well as sailing the young people were also given the opportunity to try Kayaking. Our enjoyment must have been evident, as the sailing club invited us back in August to give paddle boarding a go.

Further funding meant we were able to hold another outing to the ever popular ROF 59 in the October half-term holidays.

The year ended on a high ("Oh Yes It Did!"), funding allowed us to take the Young People to a pantomime at the Majestic Theatre in Darlington to see Aladdin.



Alongside off-site trips we also held twelve family-friendly sessions here at UTASS, again all of these were fully funded. They took place during the school holidays, starting with Easter crafts, Jubilee t-shirt designing, science-based craft sessions, a NERF battle, pumpkin carving, before ending with Christmas craft and activity sessions.



"I love coming to UTASS, we do so much fun stuff here and go on trips with our friends - we can be ourselves."

**UTASS
Young Person**

During one of the evening Youth sessions the Young People brought in donations which packed a trolley-full of useful items to support and help the people of Ukraine.

This year, we have welcomed Adele, Amy and Melanie to the youth team. They have all started their Level 2 Youth Worker qualification in partnership with TCR Hub and YMCA.



Our Youth Team:
Adele Dickeson
Melanie Lee
Amy Kinchley
Gina Richardson
Jacqui Nutter



Training

From the outset, **training** got right into full swing resulting in 2022 being a record year. Over 300 training places were provided, including two new course offerings; Excavator training and NPTC Felling & Processing Small Trees up to 380mm.



Over 100 people attended one of three Flock Health Ltd Beef & Sheep Mastering Medicines training courses.



"It was very interesting listening to all 3 participants this evening. It was all made very clear and will be so easily be put into practice. Clear, precise and informative - thank you."

Mastering Medicines Trainee



As always, Driver training proved to be very popular, with young people taking part in Lantra 13-15 Tractor Driving, Quad Bike training, pre Tractor test sessions, and car driving. These opportunities are much needed and massively appreciated.

Older trainees achieved qualifications for Rough Terrain Telehandler, Excavator as well as Quad Bike training.

"We are grateful you encouraged our son to go on the tractor training course. It has increased his confidence at driving tractors and he has just started a Saturday job which involves a little bit of tractor driving whilst scraping the cows out."

**Parent of 13-15 LANTRA
Tractor Driving Trainee**



Training



"This has opened up opportunities for me to work with some wonderful characters in incredibly beautiful landscapes. Thank you so much for helping me get a little closer to my dream."

Hedgelaying Trainee

four days of Hedge Laying training, all held locally.

During 2022 we were able to hold two days of training with the Northumbria Dry Stone Walling Association as well as



In June, we ran NPTC Safe Use of Pesticides training, ever popular, with 17 trainees attending the course, delivered at Middleton Mart. Some trainees were eligible to access funding from their Area Action Partnerships with members of the NFU benefitting from funding available through the Teesdale Branch.



Throughout the year, we ran multiple First Aid courses with 37 people attending various types predominantly Emergency First Aid At Work including Outdoor or Forestry.



Other animal health qualifications achieved during the year included the Transport of livestock, Safe Use of Sheep Dips and British Wool Shearing.

Many Thanks to our partners who enable our training endeavours.

Teesdale Area Action Partnership

Weardale Area Action Partnership

Teesdale Branch of the NFU

Wellesley Trust

Northumbria Dry Stone Walling Association

Durham Hedgerow Partnership

Funders



OUR PAST
OUR FUTURE
OUR HOME



NFU Mutual

The support that we have received this year has yet again been fantastic; from delivery partners who we work together with on an ongoing basis, such as The Prince's Countryside Fund and the Pioneering Care Partnership, our long-standing funders who have trusted our work for many years, through to those who we have only recently established a relationship with.

We say a huge thank you to you all for the vital part you have played in our journey throughout the year.

We must also recognise the generous, ongoing support that we receive from individual donors and supporters. The success of UTASS is a celebration of what we are able to achieve by working together. We really couldn't do it without you!

BALLINGER CHARITABLE TRUST



Trustee of The Mercers' Charitable Foundation

Barbour



SIR JAMES KNOTT TRUST



Weardale Action Partnership

Ballinger Charitable Trust

Barbour

British Science Association

County Durham Clinical Commissioning Group

County Durham Community Foundation

Durham Community Action

Durham County Council

Joseph Strong Frazer Trust

Middleton Educational Trust

NFU Mutual Office Barnard Castle

NFU Mutual Office North Durham Dales

The National Lottery Heritage Fund via the North Pennines AONB Partnership

Funders



SIR TOM COWIE CHARITABLE TRUST

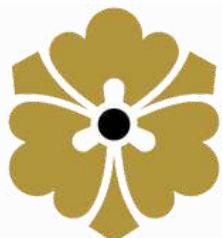


Made possible with

**Heritage
Fund**



- Northern Heartlands
- Pioneering Care Partnership
- Ralph Gowland Trust
- Sir James Knott Trust
- Sir Tom Cowie Charitable 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 Prince's Countryside Fund
- The R&H Woods Charitable Trust
- Tyne & Wear Community Foundation
- Virgin Money Foundation
- Weardale Area Action Partnership



THE PRINCE'S
COUNTRYSIDE
FUND



Our Staff



For the last 35 years my role in various positions has involved managing people. Some have been good.... some not so good, but the staff at UTASS are right there at the top of the tree with the best of them. Their care, dedication, and flexibility makes UTASS what we want it to be, and going beyond the norm, is the norm! I am proud to be able to support them in their work. Some staff have left the team in 2022, I won't list them here but thank them for all of their hard work.

Welcome too, to new staff members who continue to uphold UTASS values.

Bob Danby

UTASS Manager (and other things too!)

Adele Dickeson - Youth Support



Since 2008 Adele has worked as a Finance Officer in Higher Education. Adele joined UTASS in October 2022 having previously volunteered with the Youth Team. She lives on a farm outside Middleton-in-Teesdale with her husband and 3 boys. Adele has recently qualified as a Mental Health First Aider and is currently working towards her Young Worker qualification. She loves cooking and baking, so if she's not working or outside helping on the farm, she's often found in the kitchen!

Amy Kinchley - Youth Support

Amy has been part of the youth team at UTASS since October 2022 and is the youth safeguarding lead. Amy also volunteers as a Scout and Beavers leader for Middleton 1st scouts, she loves working with children. She lives in Middleton with her husband, 2 sons and spends most of her spare time out with her old English sheepdogs or working on one of many wool projects.



Anne Scott - Finance & Admin Support



Anne has worked at UTASS for 13 years and was previously a trustee. She is part of the admin support team and assists Bob with the UTASS finances and accounts. She was brought up on a farm in Forest-in-Teesdale and now lives on a Raby farm near Newbiggin with her husband and 2 sons. She enjoys music and trips to the theatre, however holidays are her biggest passion.

Becca Melville - Admin Support & Youth Support

Becca grew up in Weardale and, despite living in various countries, has always been drawn back to the Dales where she now lives in Holwick. Becca joined UTASS in the summer of 2021 and feels her role has really helped her to become part of the Teesdale Community. In her spare time Becca enjoys fell running, baking and exploring the hills with her dog.





Our Staff



Bob Danby - Manager, Treasurer & Company Secretary

Bob discovered UTASS in 2001 after working with them through Foot and Mouth. He became a trustee shortly after and then joined the staff as manager in 2018. He is also on the committee of several other local organisations. He lives with his wife Sheena, who like many of their generation is a professional grandmother with 4 grandchildren keeping her busy.

Caitlin Dent - Admin Support

Caitlin joined UTASS in November 2022. She also works part-time at Phillip Holden's in Barnard Castle. She lives on a farm at Lartington and when she's not working, you'll usually find her out on the farm helping out or with her sheepdog pup Penny.



Charlotte Fletcher - Admin Support & Agricultural Secretary



Charlotte has worked at UTASS as part of the Admin Support Team and Coordinator of the Oil Buying Scheme for over 7 years. In October 2022 she became Agricultural Secretary working alongside Richard and trying to absorb as much knowledge and experience from him as possible. She lives on a tenant hill farm in Upper Teesdale with her husband and two sons. In her spare time, she enjoys spending time with friends, attending music concerts, sampling a gin or two... gardening and going for walks.

Emma Spry - Social Media & Admin Support

Emma has been a part of the Admin Support Team at UTASS for nearly 10 years. She also works for a building company, and has looked after their accounts now for over 20 years. She lives in Upper Teesdale on a tenanted farm with her husband and two daughters. Emma lives for days filled with friends, family, laughter, and live music.



Gina Richardson - Youth Team Lead & Community Engagement



Gina has worked for UTASS for nearly 15 years, starting as a volunteer. She holds 2 part time roles supporting all ages and abilities in our community. Gina is still 'semi-retired' and enjoying the flexibility to spend time with family and friends.

Grace Crawford - Funding & Strategic Development Officer

Grace joined UTASS in 2020 and looks after all things funding and development related. Grace grew up on a farm just outside Middleton-in-Teesdale and lives locally with her family. She likes a challenge and for 2023 has set her sights on getting to the end of the Great North Run.



Our Staff



Jacqui Nutter - Youth Support

Jacqui joined UTASS in 2021, as a member of the Youth Support Team.

Jacqui enjoys providing an extra pair of hands to run the Youth Drop in sessions and running activities for children and young people.

Julia Stephenson - Training Coordinator

Julia has been at UTASS since 2001 and particularly enjoys the opportunity her training role and organising Music & Memories sessions provides to help people. Outside of work she enjoys cooking and Yoga and likes to get out on the farm among cattle and sheep, especially when it can combine looking after her Grandchildren.



June Wainwright - Resilience Worker



June joined UTASS at the beginning of the pandemic as a volunteer and later as Resilience Worker, including helping people access services, recover from anxiety, depression, domestic violence, regain fitness after Covid and help manage the symptoms of post traumatic stress disorder. June has lived in the dale since 1989 and enjoys painting and yoga. She lives with husband Ray and two border collies.

Melanie Lee - Resilience Worker & Youth Support

Melanie became a member of the team in 2022, starting as a volunteer counsellor, followed by a youth worker, and latterly she joined the resilience support team. Melanie lives just outside Staindrop on a mixed farm with her husband and 3 children along with numerous animals.



Richard Betton - Farmers Liaison Worker

Richard has worked for UTASS since it first opened. Recently retired from farming, he has a life-time of experience of Upland Farming, support schemes and lobbying Government agencies on behalf of farmers. He assists farmers to maximise the opportunities to develop their businesses in the best way for them.

Tessa Wigham - Agricultural Secretary

Tess was one of our longest serving staff having been at UTASS for over 20 years. All good things come to an end and in May we said goodbye to Tess who is now spending more time at home with her husband John in North Cumbria where they are partners in a beef and sheep farm. I'm certain you will join us in thanking her for her service, and wish her well.



Our Trustees & Governance

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 (£130k - £260K).

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.



Hon. Secretary
Mrs Louise Dalton
Farmer

UTASS Financial Summary For the Year ending 31st December 2022

Income

Donations	35,883
Grants	119,844
Income from charitable activities	226,352
Investment income	<u>3,578</u>
	<u>385,657</u>

Expenditure

Staff costs	220,466
Project costs	61,735
Other costs	<u>82,195</u>
	<u>364,396</u>

Investment losses

Surplus for the year	(3,752)
	17,509

Assets and liabilities at 31st December 2022

Fixed assets including investments	44,289
Current assets including bank accounts	375,361
Current liabilities	(17,924)
Net assets	<u>401,726</u>

Funds

Restricted funds	122,238
Reserves	209,008
Other unrestricted funds	<u>70,480</u>
Total funds	<u>401,726</u>



Prof. Sarah Elton
Professor at
Durham University



Philip Lamb
Accountant



Chairman
Michael McGarry
Solicitor



Our Trustees & Governance



Vice-Chair

Richard Matthews
Veterinary Surgeon

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.

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

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

Six trustee meetings are scheduled per year, though this number can vary according to need. In 2022 six were held in addition to the AGM.

These meetings have returned to the pre-Covid norm of face to face but with the benefit of a Zoom option for trustees not able to attend in person.

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.

During 2022 Robyn Peat a long standing trustee resigned, though he still advises the trustee on matters relating to leases, property etc. The trustees would like to express their gratitude for his continued support.

We were pleased to welcome Fay Hutchinson, Philip Lamb and Steve Lumb as trustees, each bringing a valuable expertise to the team.

The improvements regarding trustee induction and retention identified in the full governance review undertaken in 2020/21, have been implemented.

Also the changes proposed as a result of that review which allow greater flexibility to the tenure of trustees and composition of the board were ratified at the 2022 AGM .

One of those changes allowed Stephanie Markwick to be co-opted to gain an insight to the workings of the trustees. As per the newly agreed procedures Stephanie will stand for election as a full trustee at the 2023 AGM.



Steve Lumb

Retired GP



Roy Oxby

Retired Bank
Official



Carl Stephenson

Farmer



Ian Tallentire

Garage Proprietor



The "Last Word"!

Its not often that I get the last word so I'm going to make the most of it!

I would suggest that 2022 was a good year for UTASS. We have seen a return to pre-Covid activities and an increase both in the use of the building and in the activities and services provided, many of which are highlighted in this report.

It has given me great satisfaction to see new people use UTASS's services. The craft sessions have been very successful in this regard, it was good to see generations coming together with obvious mutual pleasure, as grandparents, parents and children were able to share the experiences.

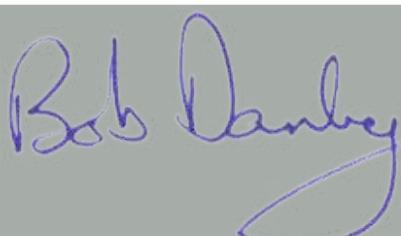
On the other hand, it's disappointing that there are still a lot of people who are not aware of the breadth of services UTASS offers. In fairness it shouldn't be surprising as our offerings constantly adapt in response to changing needs. We need to work on spreading the word!

I don't want to give the impression that we have forgotten the reason UTASS came into being, I'd like to stress that we continue to provide all the support and services to agriculture that we have done in the past. I think that this is more important now than at any time since 2001 when I first became involved with UTASS as the police liaison officer for Foot and Mouth. The present combination of the economic situation and rising costs is challenging everyone, but the change and uncertainty regarding agricultural payments, increase in fertilizer costs etc., are adding another layer of concerns for farmers.

Something never changes year on year and that is my gratitude and admiration of the UTASS staff. It amuses me when new staff are flabbergasted by the diverse range of requests they receive. In a lot of ways they are the architect of their own destruction, as to their credit they always find a solution. Well done to you all and thank you for keeping me in line !

Also enormous thanks once again to our volunteers, without whom, UTASS would struggle to provide services to the community. And last, but as the famous saying goes, not least, my thanks to the trustees who give up their time to steer UTASS. I truly appreciate their guidance and support.

In 2023 we will continue to be alert to changing needs and where possible provide necessary support.



Bob Danby CMgr MCMI
UTASS Manager, Company Secretary
Treasurer



Upper Teesdale Agricultural Support Services

Registered Office:

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

Telephone: **01833 641010**

Email: **info@utass.org**

Website: **www.utass.org**



Facebook: **@UtassUpperTees**



Twitter: **@UtassUpperTees**



Instagram: **@utass_upper_tees**

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