



INTRODUCTION

Alnwick Community Trust has experienced a tricky year. There have been a number of unfortunate personal circumstances which have impacted both on the trustees and the volunteers in general. This does perhaps reflect the age group which the Alnwick Community Trust mostly serves.

This report sets out the purpose, goals, opportunities, challenges, and achievements of Alnwick Community Trusts

This report provides a framework to illustrate the projects undertaken by Alnwick Community Trust, during its fourth year as a Registered Charity. This includes changes that have occurred and summarizes plans for new or potential projects in the next twelve months.

BACKGROUND

Alnwick Community Trust is a registered Charity No. 1197210 formed following a mutual development of purpose between two groups: Loving Alnwick and Investing in Alnwick.

Loving Alnwick started in 2018 as a small community group with a handful of volunteers working on various environmental and social community projects. Through, connecting with additional private and public organisations, for example, Town and County Councils, the Alnwick Garden, Northumberland Estates, and the Chamber of Trade. It was agreed by the Board of Directors, in 2019, for 'Loving Alnwick' to become 'Investing in Alnwick' a not-for-profit company. Further development transpired which indicated that a Charity would encapsulate the aims and objectives of the group. Hence, the current Alnwick Community Trust was registered with the Charity Commission in December 2021.

The current and past trustees are all volunteers, who give an inordinate amount of time to improve the town and support vulnerable people through a range of projects. Our funding principally comes from fees related to the activities the trust undertakes.

PURPOSE OF ALNWICK COMMUNITY TRUST

- To promote social inclusion for the public benefit in Alnwick by preventing people from becoming socially excluded, relieving the needs of those people who are
- socially excluded and assisting them to integrate into society.

For the purpose of this clause 'socially excluded' means being excluded from society, or part of society, on the grounds of economic or social disadvantage.

- For the public benefit in Alnwick to provide or assist in the provision of facilities in the interests of social welfare for recreation or other leisure time occupation of individuals who have need of such facilities by reason of their youth, age, infirmity or disability, financial hardship or social circumstances with the object of improving their conditions of life.



KEY TRUSTEE ROLES

CHAIR	Joanne Smailes
VICE CHAIR	David Taylor
TREASURER	Julia Munford
VICE TREASURER	Annette Playle
SECRETARY	Claire Mitchell

CURRENT PROJECTS

JUST SING ALNWICK is a singing group formed in 2023. Singing is known to benefit our health and well-being and increasing studies suggest that this can enhance your mood, immune system, blood pressure, reduce feelings of chronic pain and is increasingly promoted as a positive activity for dementia sufferers.

The group meet every Thursday between 12.30 and 2.30 at St James Church located in the heart of Alnwick town centre. The location is fully accessible and supported by a kitchen area. This enables the group to socialise before the singing commences. The group supports members with dementia, autism, stroke, tinnitus, social anxiety, and depression. Perhaps as a reflection of group composition there has been a steady decline in attendance over the year. A number of strategies have been employed to increase membership which have been partially successful. Session fees during 2025 increased from £2 to £3. However, this includes weekly refreshments and members are provided with all the materials e.g. folders and song sheets as well as a complimentary t-shirt that they are asked to wear at any formal performances. The first two sessions are attended without cost and if any members require a carer they can also attend for free. The group also make donations to outside charities, generally on a quarterly basis. In the interest of fairness, each individual member was asked to anonymously nominate a charity of their choice, these were placed in 'a hat' and at suitable intervals a charity was drawn at random to receive a mutually agreed donation. In 2025, donations were given to the North Northumberland Hospice and British Heart Foundation.

SHAPE SHIFTERS is an exercise group established in 2023 that meets every other Wednesday between 7 and 8pm. Fees for attendance being £2. The exercise is based on belly dancing which is known to be suitable for all age groups and abilities. As one of the oldest forms of dance the benefits of belly dancing are undeniable; belly dancing promotes balance and strength, improves digestion and co-ordination as well as being fun and highly expressive. During 2025, the group experienced a number of difficulties. Firstly, finding a suitable location proved difficult. The group met in a hospitality venue for free. Hospitality venues are well publicised as experiencing difficulties themselves and the group are no longer offered a no cost venue. Secondly, the group leader has experienced both personal and family health options. Therefore, in September, the difficult decision was made to suspend the group's activities. There is some hope that an alternative may be found.



ALNWICK MEN'S GROUP meets every First and Third Monday of the month. It is a group for lonely or isolated men or just somewhere to keep warm in like-minded company. Managed by volunteers who take the members on trips, undertake art, play board games, have coffee, chats offer support, friendship, and kindness. In line with the Shape Shifter group. This group was reliant on the generosity of hosting the meetings for free in a local hospitality venue. This venue was no longer able to provide this facility and although a suitable alternative was initially found this was not viewed as suitable by the group members. The group although intended to be self-managed struggled to operate under the new circumstances and now no longer meet.

TOWN GUIDES are a resolute team of volunteers who meet and greet visitors using the main town car parks. They usually undertake a two-hour shift at weekends during the tourist season and offer parking discs at a cost of £1 alongside distributing leaflets e.g. Good Food Guide, answer questions and direct people to attractions and eateries. Northumberland Council offer local organisations parking discs for a cost of £0.50 on the agreement that these are then offered to visitors at a standard cost of £1. It is estimated that approximately five thousand tourists per year engage with the Town Guides. The most dedicated town guides being members of the Alnwick Men's Group who through engagement with the group have developed the confidence to undertake this role. There have been two key figures from the Men's group have continued this activity despite both also experiencing significant health issues during the year. This is a seasonal role, and it is currently unknown whether in 2026 the key figures will be able to continue.

GET CRAFTY. Remembering All was a collaborative project with a local knot and natter group. This involved the creation of an art piece integrating textile-based crafts. The piece was designed to commemorate the 80th anniversary of VE day. Alongside traditional red poppies the work incorporated purple poppies to honour animals, black poppies to highlight the contribution and sacrifice of Black, African, Caribbean, and Indigenous communities. White poppies illustrate a commitment to seeking peace and as such respects all victims of war whether they be armed forces, civilians or conscientious objectors. The final work was displayed in Alnwick Playhouse for several days including the reception for honoured guests taking part in the annual Remembrance Sunday Parade. The playhouse has indicated that they will now use the work on an annual basis.



As noted at the start of this report 2025 has been a difficult year for the trust. There has somewhat been a reliance on one or two key trustees to maintain and drive these activities forward. The main driving force has been subject to both personal health issues and close family caring responsibilities during the year. There have also been similar issues experienced by a number of the less active trustees. Therefore, consideration has been given to closing down the charity. However, following a

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plea from a number of members it has been decided to give the charity a further twelve months to reestablish itself with the community.

The following Appendix provides readers with an end of year financial statement for the charity.

Joanne Smailes

Chair

alnwickcommunitytrust@gmail.com

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Alnwick Community Trust

Charity Number:
1197210

Receipts and Payments Accounts

Period Start 01/01/25 to Period End 31/12/25

Section A Receipts and Payments							
All to the nearest £							
A1 Reciepts	Unrestricted	Restricted		Endowments		Total	Last Year
Brought Forward	5801	108				5909	6411
Donations to trust	87					87	528
Just Sing Alnwick	1160					1160	1765
Alnwick Men's Group						0	93
Town Guides (Parking Discs)	75					75	314
Percy Lion Trail						0	28
Shape Shifters	80					80	183
Getting Crafty	0					0	148
Member Donations for Charity	43					43	138
Sub Total (A1 Receipts)	7246	108				7354	9608

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A3 Payments	Unrestricted	Restricted	Endowments	Total	Last Year
Loving Alnwick	0			0	335
Trust Admin: Equipment	19			19	143
Trust Admin: Legal	56			56	263
Trust Admin: Publicity	0			0	90
Trust Admin: Stationary	0			0	641
Getting Crafty: Equipment	0			0	67
Charity Donations	0	60		60	50
Just Sing: Equipment	0			0	65
Just Sing: Room Hire	1008			1008	1199
Just Sing: Session Refreshments	66			66	306
Just Sing: Stationary	173			173	126
Alnwick Men's Club: Social	0			0	156
Town Guides: Parking Discs	100			100	150
Reading Group: Equipment	0			0	80
Shape Shifters: Equipment	0			0	28
Sub Total (A3 Payments)	1422	60		1482	3699
Balance (Net of Receipts)	5824	48		5872	5909
A6 Cash Funds	10				

B5 Liabilities

Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all Trustees

Joanne
Smailes

Chair

END OF REPORT