

Local Environmental Action Fund

Impact Evaluation Report

January 2011

Katie Wellstead



CONTENTS

	Foreword	3
	Executive Summary	5
1.	Background to LEAF	7
2.	LEAF aims and criteria	8
3.	Management and delivery of LEAF	9
4.	LEAF project impact analysis and lessons learnt	10
5.	Taking local action on global issues	15
6.	LEAF programme impact and lessons learnt	19
7.	Conclusions & recommendations	24
8.	Appendices	27
	A – Community Foundation and Area Overview	
	B - LEAF Guidelines	
	C - Job description and person specification of AD role	
	D - Statistical analysis of LEAF grant making 2006 - 2010	
	E – List of grants awarded December 2006 – September 2010	
	F – Examples of LEAF projects and impacts	
	G - Research methodology	

FOREWORD BY JONATHON PORRITT



I am delighted to have been invited to write the Foreword for this Report – just reading through it has been a great delight. The Report reflects on the great progress made by the Local Environmental Action Fund to date, shares the learning over the last five years, and looks forward to the future direction of the Fund. Things have changed dramatically during that time, but while wider awareness of climate change issues has steadily grown on both a public and political level, an even more significant shift in mindsets and actions is still required by every one of us over the next five years.

My own interest and close personal connection with the Local Environmental Action Fund goes back to 2006, when I had the pleasure of attending the Community Foundation’s AGM. Part of my brief was to challenge the Foundation to put sustainability at the heart of all its actions. The newly- launched Local Environmental Action Fund was a crucial part of this strategy, and I applauded at the time the fact that it “promoted collective community action”, clearly recognising that lots of very small actions can result in a global revolution.

The Report provides a valuable resource (with many practical tips) for all those who share a desire to take personal responsibility for making their environment more sustainable. It is also an essential reference guide for other Trusts and Foundations who want to increase their own level of environmental funding. The section “*LEAF Programme Impact and Lessons Learnt*” shares experience from over five years of practice with a “warts and all” honesty that can only be helpful to others.

It is particularly pleasing to see that the emphasis that the Fund has put on sharing learning. The work to encourage other Community Foundations across the country to increase their level of environmental funding, utilising the expertise built up in Tyne & Wear and Northumberland, is particularly pleasing. Over £750,000 has been given directly to local projects, which is a fantastic achievement in a relatively short period of time. But the impact is many times greater when learning is shared along the way. The innovation and commitment of the donors involved is to be richly applauded.

I would therefore encourage anyone reading this Report to consider how they themselves can get involved, whether they are families, individuals, businesses, or community representatives. This can be done either by directly supporting the Fund through a donation, or by applying some of the learning to their own day to day lives where they can have most impact.

It seems only yesterday that I stepped up to the parapet at Hexham Abbey at the 2006 AGM. The potential seemed great at the time, but it takes real drive and determination to turn potential into real action on the ground, generating real benefits for thousands of people across the region.

It is truly inspiring to see what has been achieved to date, what is being shared with others, and what the Fund seeks to achieve in the future, engaging more communities to take action at a local level. I hope you find the report as informative and encouraging as I have!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jonathon Porritt". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Jonathon Porritt

Founder Director of Forum for the Future

January 2011

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Local Environmental Action Fund (LEAF) at the Community Foundation serving Tyne & Wear and Northumberland was established in 2006 as a collaborative environmental grant making fund programme. It supports high quality projects that have a positive impact on the environment, and educate people about global environmental issues and their ability to make an impact locally.

To date LEAF has awarded 83 grants totalling over £785,000 to voluntary and community organisations. Through collating and sharing the learning coming from LEAF supported projects, the LEAF programme aims to encourage a wider network of voluntary and community organisations to replicate this learning and take action on environmental issues in their local area.

This report examines the progress and impact that LEAF has made since 2006 against its original objectives:

- More effective, collaborative and focused grant-making on environmental issues.
- Increased knowledge of environmental projects' needs and best practice.
- Make a positive impact on the environment
- Increased education about global environmental issues in local communities.
- Increased knowledge of environmental grant-making amongst other charitable trusts.

The report provides an evidence base of the programme's impact to date, highlights key learning and best practice both from a programme delivery as well as project delivery point of view, and considers the future of the Fund after March 2012.

The Fund has come a long way and achieved a great deal since it was established in 2006. LEAF as a collaborative environmental grant making programme, is delivering ground-breaking work, enabling LEAF funding partners to maximise the impact of their contributions, and gain a greater degree of leverage and capacity than they would have been able to achieve individually. LEAF has also enabled the individual funding partners to develop detailed expertise and knowledge of the range of positive environmental and social impacts achieved through supporting different types of environmental projects.

LEAF has grown into a respected source of best practice both regionally and nationally on environmental grant making, with the dedicated outreach function of the LEAF programme being critical to the collation and dissemination of the learning from LEAF supported projects.

Most importantly, the Fund has inspired individuals and communities to take action on environmental issues, providing models that can be easily replicated by others. LEAF has demonstrated that with the right support, local people and communities can be empowered to find and deliver solutions to their own local environmental issues. As the Government's Big Society proposals focus around communities taking responsibility for issues at a local level, there is much that LEAF can potentially achieve in the future to support this concept.

The demand and need for the LEAF programme can only increase after March 2012, to ensure that more local communities and organisations have the available resources and support to enable them to take action and adapt to evolving environmental challenges. As environmental issues are inextricably linked to economic and social issues, LEAF has a critical role to play in helping communities to minimise their impact on the environment and develop in a more sustainable way, thus creating a more just and fair society.

1. BACKGROUND TO LEAF

1.1 Initial Need Identification and Development of LEAF

The Community Foundation Tyne & Wear and Northumberland (hereafter called the Community Foundation) helps local people and businesses manage their charitable giving (see Appendix A for an organisation overview), aiming to inspire and support giving that strengthens communities and enriches local life. In 2005, a Community Foundation donor who has a strong personal interest in environmental issues, discussed with the Community Foundation his wish to explore environmental grant making in the region, and look at whether there was scope to increase it within community foundations, and within other grant making trusts.

Following an initial seminar in November 2005 hosted by Cumbria and Tyne & Wear and Northumberland Community Foundations, a working party was established to explore environmental grant-making in North East England and whether there was scope to increase it within, and with leadership from, the Community Foundation. Over 18 months the working party held seminars and one-to-one discussions with existing donors, Trusts and Foundations, public sector and voluntary sector groups in the region to investigate the opportunities for environmental grant-making in the area

The Community Foundation's activities around environmental issues up to that point were modest, but it recognised that the correlation between poverty in local communities and the environment was likely to become much stronger in the future as the impacts of climate change were felt. As the Community Foundation's projects, programmes and partnerships were designed to address gaps in provision, raise awareness of issues or to inform and influence others, involvement in environmental grant-making was a key strategic opportunity for the Community Foundation.

The findings of the working party concluded that there was an opportunity for charitable trusts to become more effective grant makers on environmental issues by collaborating and focusing their efforts, and by developing greater knowledge about needs and best practice on environmental grant making in the area. A proposal for a collaborative environmental programme, LEAF (then called Local Action on Global Issues) was developed, with seminars and workshops held to gain donor support.

The proposal sought to create an annual pool of grant funding from which to award grants. LEAF was established with a three year commitment totalling £495,000 to March 2009 from the Greggs Foundation, the Shears Foundation, the Community Foundation, the private individual donor who was instrumental in advancing discussions on the issue from the outset, and the Sir James Knott Trust. LEAF was finally launched by Jonathon Porritt in autumn 2006 at the Community Foundation's AGM. As a pilot collaborative environmental grant making programme it was believed to be the first initiative of its kind in the country.

2. LEAF AIMS AND CRITERIA

2.1 Vision and Purpose

The purpose of LEAF is to support projects that will have a positive impact on the environment, and will educate people to take action locally in a manner that will help to address global environmental issues. By supporting local projects, LEAF aims to share lasting practical lessons and replicable models.

2.2 Objectives

The agreed objectives for LEAF are:

- More effective, collaborative and focused grant-making on environmental issues.
- Increased knowledge of environmental projects' needs and best practice.
- Make a positive impact on the environment
- Increased education about global environmental issues in local communities.
- Increased knowledge of environmental grant-making amongst other charitable trusts.

2.3 Criteria

In order to deliver the above objectives, projects supported by LEAF need to demonstrate at least one of the following outcomes:

- Encouraging communities to get involved in environmental activities
- Changing behaviours leading to more local environmental action
- Having a positive impact on the environment
- Sharing learning about the environment with others

The original guidelines were very broad, enabling projects to focus on any environmental issues, to encourage innovation. The full guidelines for LEAF are found in Appendix B. While LEAF still supports projects covering any environmental issue, the guidelines now include annual priority environmental issues that have been less well represented in LEAF grant making, to encourage applications on these issues. Critically, projects must have social and community benefits, as well as environmental and can be focused on practical action or support behaviour change through awareness raising based schemes.

2.4 Funding amounts

LEAF awards grants from £1,000 - £20,000 for revenue as well as capital projects in Tyne & Wear and Northumberland. Groups have to meet the general eligibility criteria for the Community Foundation. It primarily supports one off or one year projects, but has awarded grants over more than one year.

3. MANAGEMENT AND DELIVERY OF LEAF

3.1 Initial set up 2006-2009 (Phase 1)

LEAF partners agreed that LEAF would be promoted as a partnership between participating trusts and donors. Each partner was invited to sit on the Fund Committee, meeting quarterly to agree on projects put to the Committee for consideration.

It was agreed that the Community Foundation would service and support the Fund. Applications were, and continue to be received and assessed using the standard Community Foundation application process, with applicants needing to meet the general eligibility criteria for the Community Foundation, as well as the criteria for LEAF itself. During 2006 – 2009, the Community Foundation also provided additional funds for staffing and servicing the LEAF committee via the provision of staff time on a part time basis.

3.2 Dedicated staffing 2009 – 2012 (Phase 2)

After a review of LEAF's progress and impact in summer 2008, partners agreed that the initial LEAF pilot programme had proven to be successful, and that LEAF should be continued with a further three year commitment totalling £600,000 from the Greggs Foundation, the Community Foundation, the Shears Foundation and the private donor, covering the period April 2009 – 31 March 2012.

By 2009, as LEAF was still the only collaborative scheme of its kind in the country that Committee members were aware of, the potential for local and national dissemination of learning to a range of stakeholders was significant. Recognising that dedicated staffing support was needed to effectively achieve this, LEAF partners agreed that £150,000 from the three year funding commitment for Phase 2 should be allocated to enable the Community Foundation to cover the appointment of a full time member of staff. The post was recruited at the Community Foundation's Assistant Director level, in order to ensure that the individual had the specific environmental knowledge and background required (see Appendix C for job description/ person specification).

Critically, the Assistant Director (Environment) role is split into two specific functions:

- a) Fund management – including day to day fund management, servicing the LEAF committee, proactive support and guidance to VCS groups to maximise the quality of applications being received, PR of the grant programme and monitoring grants to ensure effective collation and sharing of lessons learnt.
- b) Outreach and development – acting as an ambassador on environmental issues and raising the programme's profile through publicity, networking, organising events/ seminars, attracting new donors to LEAF, and sharing best practice and practical solutions coming from LEAF projects and the LEAF programme overall.

4. LEAF PROJECT IMPACT ANALYSIS

The following section of the report outlines the key impacts and outcomes of LEAF supported projects to date and summarises the learning that has come from these projects. A full statistical analysis of LEAF grant funding can be found in Appendix D and a full list of LEAF supported projects are available in Appendix E.

4.1 Key outputs to date

- 153 applications have been received, requesting funding of over £1.7m.
- Grants totalling £785,310 have been awarded to 83 projects.
- Over 50% of applications received have been from general VCS groups without a specific environmental remit.
- Year on year, LEAF is increasingly reaching out to the wider VCS sector, with 46% of the grants approved now being awarded to general VCS groups.
- Environmental VCS groups received 57% of the total grant amount overall, compared to 43% general VCS groups.
- Northumberland and Newcastle areas have received the greatest proportion of the total amount of grant awarded, although the percentage share is decreasing year on year.
- Area wide initiatives have started to increase their percentage share of the amount of grant awarded reflecting a more scaled approach to project delivery.
- LEAF has struggled year on year, to generate significant levels of quality applications from South Tyneside in particular, but also Gateshead and Sunderland.
- Energy (20%), sustainable communities (15%) and multi issue (15%) are the top three themes that have received the most amount of grant funding from LEAF. However, these percentages are reducing year on year, and other themes including biodiversity, marine/ coastal, waste and ecosystems are gradually becoming more prevalent. This varies with the national trends on environmental grant making according to 'Where the Green Grants Went' publication which shows that agriculture, biodiversity/ species preservation, and multi issue work are the top three areas receiving the most Trust funding nationally.
- LEAF projects supported include eight projects improving access to local food growing, eight projects supporting and raising awareness of biodiversity, 14 projects focused on energy efficiency or micro renewable technology, and 13 projects working to promote sustainable communities as a whole.
- LEAF projects have directly impacted on at least 30,000 beneficiaries. This figure excludes any beneficiaries from projects which are still 'live' and those who may have been impacted on indirectly.
- Carbon savings have not been routinely monitored through LEAF to date, although four groups have reported collective savings of at least 100 tonnes of CO2 per annum
- Groups have reported financial savings, of anything from £500 up to £10,000 pa.

4.2 Project Lessons Learnt

A wide range of lessons have been learnt from individual LEAF projects. Many of these can be summarised in the following sections and individual case studies are outlined in more detail in Appendix F.

4.2.1 Reaching target beneficiaries

The VCS sector has developed a broad range of tools and skills in order to reach marginalised communities and build their capacity. Therefore the engagement of VCS groups is critical in reaching out to these communities to encourage behaviour change on environmental issues.

LEAF projects have demonstrated that it is critical to spend the time developing the capacity of the local community. This can take many months, particularly when working to engage hard to reach beneficiaries in environmental issues and messages. However the benefit of this is that it creates long term sustainability in the project.

The use of art and drama and other creative methods have proven useful for putting across messages particularly if individuals have poor literacy skills or English is a second language to them. Relating issues in terms of financial savings (on fuel, travel, groceries etc.) rather than only in terms of environmental impacts is also critical, particularly when working to engage parents and older people.

4.2.2 Planning issues

Dealing with planning conditions has been a regular learning point with a range of LEAF projects covering micro-renewables, local food and grey water storage projects.

4.2.3 Skills

It is important to ensure that groups have the appropriate support. LEAF projects have shown that a lot of knowledge and expertise is needed particularly with projects involving micro-renewables or small capital schemes. If groups do not have this within their committees and volunteers, they need to ensure they have the support from external advisers very early on in their project development.

4.2.4 Timescales

LEAF projects have generally taken longer than expected to deliver their targets. This is particularly due to their pioneering nature which has often meant they have had to overcome unforeseen hurdles along the way. Weather, engaging hard to reach groups, planning issues, securing match funding and stakeholder involvement have all impacted on LEAF timescales. Flexibility has therefore been a critical element from a LEAF fund management perspective.

It has also taken a long time to start to see behaviour change in individuals, with positive reinforcement needed over many months. One project for example stated that it is only now after long term volunteering with the project, that one individual has developed sufficient confidence to grow his own veg at home, while another is

now looking to convert his lawn into an allotment, and is asking about how to create composters from old pallets.

4.2.5 Quality versus quantity

The number of beneficiaries from individual LEAF projects varies greatly. Some have worked directly with only 30 people, others have impacted on hundreds. It is fair to say that each level has its merits, and smaller scale projects do not necessarily have any less or more impact than one that reaches out to a much larger number of beneficiaries.

What is critical to consider are the skills and abilities of the target beneficiaries. One grant recipient stated that it is currently working with volunteers who have learning difficulties and therefore they need closer attention and a longer support time before they start to take on board environmental messages. One project worker interviewed stated “it is better to work over time to get one person out of 50 changing their attitudes than working with 2,000 and not changing anybody’s.” As a result, it may be that grant recipients need continuation funding to enable them to continue to deliver on the same site with the same group of volunteers over a longer period of time.

4.2.6 Competing priorities mean relevance is critical

For individuals and organisations who have a mixture of competing priorities, LEAF grant recipients have reported that making green issues relevant has been vital for adequate engagement. Schools for example, have been reluctant to engage with something new that will be an additional responsibility for schools staff. LEAF projects have had most success in recruiting schools where the work has fed directly into the curriculum and through word of mouth recommendations.

Promoting projects through interconnections with national campaigns has also worked well and given weight to local projects. Some projects have not been as successful as hoped, as particularly in the current economic climate individuals and organisations have not necessarily seen environmental issues as a priority. Job retention, having sufficient resources to deliver core work and saving money have been seen as higher priority. LEAF projects therefore, have been better received when messages have been put across in terms of financial rather than simply from an environmental angle.

4.2.7 Project sustainability

Feedback from grant recipients has been that their LEAF projects are either still running without additional funding, or have received funding from elsewhere to continue. In some cases they have also stated that the original LEAF project has led them to deliver other environmental activities. The key to lasting sustainability with LEAF projects has been to have something that is physically left at the end of the project along while also building in the skills in the community to continue to manage and develop the project.

Grant recipients surveyed report that there has been both more environmental awareness within their organisations and their staff, trustees and volunteers, as well as within the beneficiaries and the wider community. Groups have stated for example stated that learning has helped them mainstreaming project ideas into core organisational activity, and has led to wider initiatives - “looking back, I can see how

the project has been a precursor for some of the bigger sustainability initiatives in the town, such as our One Planet Living Programme.”

4.3 Specific learning from project themes

Micro-renewable energy projects:

- As this technology is still very new, and changing rapidly, VCS groups have found that contractors, utility companies and planners, as well as themselves are learning as they go along which often causes delays to projects.
- Projects can take up to four years from initial feasibility studies to actual completion.
- Other grant funders have required evidence of spend before releasing funding, which puts smaller VCS groups in a difficult cashflow position. LEAF provides upfront payments where agreed, which has facilitated VCS groups in paying contractors’ invoices on time without it affecting their cashflow.
- A range of measures need to be put in place to make a renewable energy scheme successful. The building needs to be energy efficient in the first place eg no draughts, double glazing, insulation etc, and as one group stated ‘in order to get the best out of renewable technologies you must combine them together. ie a heat pump uses a lot of electricity therefore solar photovoltaic panels and solar thermal panels decrease the amount of off-site electricity you use to run the heat pump.’



*Sustainable Energy project,
Amberley Primary School*

Local Food Projects

- Projects do not need to be complicated or costly, with some LEAF projects showing how small scale allotment plots (5 ft x 5ft), back yard growing, use of recycled tools, containers etc can engage anyone in local food growing.
- Some groups try to take on too much too soon, when it is the ability to take small steps to build up people’s confidence which helps to inspire people to get more involved.
- Groups should check the previous land use to ensure that it will not affect what they can use it for.



*Sowing and Growing Together project,
National Trust, Gibside*

- Flexigraze for example is engaging local communities in the rearing of local lamb and in learning about the value grazing for conservation. To purchase half a lamb at the end of the season, would cost around £70 which for many families or individuals would be too much to pay upfront. However, food buying groups which collectively purchase the meat, and then distribute it to the members of the buying groups, are enabling access to good quality local meat at reasonable prices.



Conservation grazing project, Flexigraze

Biodiversity

- Biodiversity projects are most accessible where messages are easily replicated by individuals within their own gardens/ back yards, community areas or school grounds. For example, learning what flowers are suitable to support bees and other wildlife, and making cheap wildlife homes from recycled materials. This overcomes issues particularly with projects seeking beehives, where the long term care implications are significant.
- Linking messages around biodiversity to wider issues of health, wellbeing and day to day activities, helps individuals to see the wider relevance of the need for conservation activities. For example, the Creating a Buzz project focused on raising awareness of the decline of the bee, has integrated elements of biology, health benefits of honey and bees' role in pollinating our crops and therefore supporting our food supply.
- It is perhaps easier to engage young people in projects focused on biodiversity and conservation than it is their parents, as parents seek the financial benefits of carrying out activities.



Creating a Buzz project, Groundwork North East

5. TAKING LOCAL ACTION ON GLOBAL ISSUES

It is important to reflect on the significance of the LEAF supported projects from the perspective of wider global issues, not only from an environmental perspective but also a social/ economic perspective.

5.1 Global environmental issues

Carbon reduction – LEAF projects such as the Belford Energy Saving Together project, have helped equip communities and individuals with the skills and awareness to take simple measures to reduce carbon footprints which ultimately assist in meeting national carbon reduction targets. BEST for example is working towards a target of reducing the village's carbon emissions by 10% by Dec 2010 with a range of schemes and awareness raising measures.



Belford Energy Saving Together project

Reducing the pressure on water resources – six LEAF projects have looked at fresh water as an issue. As climate change will lead to increased pressures on already scarce fresh water resources, LEAF projects are directly helping communities to look at ways to adapt. Stocksfield Cricket Club's grey water storage project for example, has already enabled it to recycle several thousand litres of water for use on the playing fields.

Natural resource depletion – globally, consumerism is depleting our natural resources through use of fossil fuels, water, fishing, intensive agriculture, mining and logging. LEAF projects, such as a Blue Watch Youth Centre's bike maintenance scheme for young people, have raised awareness about the need for reducing consumption, reusing and recycling in the context of simple everyday items. LEAF



Cycle Maintenance project, Bluewatch Youth Centre

projects have created an appreciation of the materials involved in the production of everyday items such as inner-tubes. Through creating awareness and an appreciation of what actually goes into the products which communities consume, LEAF has the opportunity to enable people to make informed choices about what they purchase or throw away.

Biodiversity – 2010 is the International Year of Biodiversity and LEAF has supported a range of projects including woodland management of ancient woodland at Cockshot Dene in Prudhoe, habitat improvements to support wild bee populations and conservation grazing using rare breed sheep. Core to all of these projects has been volunteer engagement and awareness raising, which has helped to educate local communities about the importance of local environments and green spaces.

Land use – Green spaces are considered increasingly important particularly in urban settings, not only for biodiversity, but for people’s mental and physical health and in helping communities appreciate the role of green spaces around them. Some LEAF projects have created new green spaces or brought areas back into community use, One group stated “through our project we are opening volunteers and communities eyes to what is on their own doorstep and what they can access locally.” Another local community project in Newcastle has enabled “203 people living on the estate to have an improved community space on their doorstep. What were two squares of bleak flagstones are now lovely green spaces with flower beds and trees.”

Climate Change Adaptation – While few LEAF projects are specifically labelling their work with communities as supporting them to adapt to climate change, by encouraging sustainable living and minimising people’s impact on environment, LEAF projects are by their very nature, equipping individuals with the skills and awareness to be more resilient in future years. Green spaces for example, are considered a vital element of communities adapting to climate change through creating permeable surfaces to reduce flood risk and providing areas of shade with vegetation. Others projects are reducing landfill and conserving natural resources. Wor Hoose’s Food Share project for example has prevented 66 tonnes of useable food being sent to landfill in the last 12 months. If sent to landfill, the carbon footprint in producing this food would have been for no purpose, and it would have produced harmful greenhouse gases as it decomposed, exacerbating global warming.

5.2 Economic and social issues

Fuel security – communities and businesses currently rely greatly on energy from fossil fuels to provide electricity for the day to day needs of the home, business and services. At a national level Government recognises that failure to plan for alternative energy sources could lead to severe impacts on the security of our economy.

LEAF projects looking at micro renewable energy production, such as the installation of an air source heat pump at Powburn Village Hall, and photovoltaic panels at Amberley Community Primary School (which have so far generated 2252 kWh which represents 1,283 kg of carbon savings), are leading to important learning on how communities can become less dependent on oil, coal and gas, and become more self-sufficient and sustainable.

Fuel poverty – linked to dependency on fossil fuels is the continuing rise in energy prices which will exacerbate inequality and poverty low income individuals and families. LEAF projects around energy efficiency awareness have been working particularly in marginalised communities to trial different techniques to raise awareness of ways to reducing energy consumption. Good practice has been developed by National Energy Action’s PEEPS project for example which is working

in schools in marginalised areas. NEA states “the use of drama for children, who in many cases find written work difficult, is an excellent medium for learning. There is real evidence that children are very willing to take on the role of ambassadors in their homes for saving energy.”

Training and employment opportunities – some of the projects supported by LEAF, particularly those working to engage young people in environmental learning, have the potential to inspire people to move into the green jobs market in which the North East is emerging as a key player. Lookwide UK’s SOURCE project for example, links directly into a local college course. It is working with young people in Newcastle’s west end to educate them on renewable energy technologies, and has the potential to inspire some of the young people to consider employment in the environmental sector in the future.

The range of skills and self-confidence developed through volunteering has also enhanced opportunities for individuals to secure work, particularly in the environmental sector. Groups have reported seeing the confidence in their volunteers develop over time, and they also state that they have learnt a range of transferrable skills for employment.

Sustainability of the voluntary sector – LEAF projects have had a range of knock on impacts particularly around improving the viability of community buildings. More energy efficient buildings are warmer and therefore better used, meaning an increase in demand for activities at the centres, while running costs for the buildings have reduced. Particularly with the current national economic climate, this is particularly important.

Wark Recreational Charity for example states that installing energy efficiency measures and a ground source heat pump into its club house has meant that “the club is now heated efficiently and very cheaply. The reinvigorated appearance and function of the club has acted as a stimulus to development. We now have several bookings for wedding receptions and large parties, something we have never been able to deliver before.”

Community cohesion – grant recipients have reported that LEAF projects have encouraged communities to come together, braking down social barriers through volunteering for example, or because their community buildings are more useable, thus reducing individual isolation particularly in rural areas. Some LEAF projects, such as Mobex NE project tackling litter in rivers, have provided diversionary activities for young people while at the same teaching an appreciation of the environment. Another grant recipient stated ‘I’ve learnt that if you put effort into something you want to happen and get talking to your neighbours, then things that seem impossible can happen.’

Health issues – there is an increasing body of research which suggests that access to green space and the outdoors has a range of physical and mental health benefits. Some of LEAF projects, such as CEED’s Nature Mill project, have demonstrated ways of using the outdoor environment to improve people’s mental and physical wellbeing. Another group has reported that through the project, one of its volunteers who is disabled has progressed so well that he is now able to hold and use tools which at the start he was not able to do. Other projects, particularly those around

growing local fresh food have demonstrated ways of growing affordable, fresh and healthy produce, which is particularly important for low income families.

Food security – tied into local food production, LEAF projects have supported local communities to consider ways of reducing their reliance on intensive farming practices and imported food supplies, and to think more creatively about food production and use. Wor Hoose's local food share scheme in the east end of Newcastle for example is not only addressing issues of food going to landfill, is also providing vital food supplies to those who otherwise would go without food.



Food Share project, Wor Hoose

6. LEAF PROGRAMME IMPACT AND LESSONS LEARNT

One of LEAF's key objectives was to develop a grant programme that enabled more effective, collaborative and focused grant-making on environmental issues. Since LEAF was established, much knowledge and learning has been gathered around the actual operation of such a collaborative grant programme and how this can best meet the needs of environmental projects. This section of the report reflects on these lessons learnt to date.

6.1 The need for a dedicated environmental grant programme for the area

As a local fund dedicated to environmental activities, LEAF has proven to be a valuable source of funding for smaller voluntary and community sector (VCS) groups, and demand for LEAF funding is now consistently three times the level of grant funding available. Grant recipients have stated that LEAF has a better understanding of what groups are asking for and trying to achieve and that in a lot of cases, is supporting work that other grant funds will not readily fund. Comments from recipients include:

“Being local, the granting body has a better understanding of the geographical area and the issues within. This knowledge gives applicants more confidence to apply than perhaps they would have to a more distant organisation.”

“This was an environment focused project and the LEAF funding was perfect for it – I'm not sure we would have been able to get the funding for it from other sources.”

“Without [LEAF] the project would not have happened.”

6.2 Critical mass of donors

LEAF provides an effective mechanism for funding partners to gain added value in funding local outcomes which make a difference both socially and environmentally. The level of contributions and the commitment over three year periods from LEAF partners from the outset of the Fund has been critical in being able to award medium sized grant amounts, placing LEAF firmly in what is a specific gap in the funding market. Recipients have stated that the ability to apply to LEAF for up to £20,000 has been a key attraction of the Fund. The majority of funds which do support environmental projects either only provide a few thousand pounds or seek applications for much larger amounts, often over £50,000.

6.3 Supporting innovation

The level of grant funding from LEAF enables projects to run over 12 months or more in some cases. Funding over this length of time has provided groups with the additional capacity and resources to innovate and trial new projects, essentially providing seed funding for ideas which in a lot of cases, particularly with non-environmental VCS groups, are not core to their day to day work. Two quotes summarise this well - “the time and cost involved in establishing the project would have been prohibitive without LEAF support.” “This fund has been invaluable in getting the project off the ground and in the group being able to invest in equipment etc. to build the project on.”

6.4 Effective grant making

It has been easier to gauge whether projects are achieving behaviour change, in those which have engaged individuals at a more intensive level, either in specific activities, or where skilled workers are brought in to raise awareness of specific environmental issues. While the more generic awareness raising environmental stands or green festivals have a role to play in information provision, they have been much harder to gauge impact from the point of view of LEAF objectives around behaviour change and individual learning. As a result, LEAF committee decided that it would no longer support green festivals after the end of Phase 1.

It has proven difficult to state categorically that supporting environmental organisations is any more effective than supporting non-environmental VCS organisations. Each has its merits, with environmental organisations being able to provide scale and an area wide approach to project delivery. In this instance, supporting the salary costs of skilled workers enables them to work intensively with a range of community groups and individuals across a geographical area. This builds capacity within the communities which assists with the long term sustainability of LEAF impacts. One community group in Sunderland stated that the impact of working in that way means that local community groups have the confidence to refer others onto them. As a result, they work at a very grass roots level.

Projects by non-environmental VCS groups have tended to be very local level, reaching fewer beneficiaries overall, but reaching those who can be the harder to reach groups. As LEAF is very much about supporting local action, supporting applications from non-environmental groups who have identified an issue they want to tackle in their local area, is equally as effective in achieving the aims of LEAF.

6.5 The value of a dedicated full time post

The dedicated post for LEAF, with specific environmental skills and background is as far as the Committee is aware, quite unique among community foundations in the UK and has been welcomed by applicants. The dedicated time has been critical in enabling the post holder to carry out proactive advice, signposting and support to VCS groups, which has been invaluable to groups, as stated by a group in north Northumberland - "the personal and local approach to assisting applications is very valuable." The proactive approach has encouraged new and inspiring projects to be brought to LEAF, and to have the time to be able to investigate applications in depth. This has enabled the Committee to have the confidence to consider more pioneering project ideas which, without being thoroughly investigated, would be less likely to be considered.

The outreach function of the post has been essential in enabling in depth evaluation of projects, promotion, new donor development, networking, and sharing of lessons learnt. These activities have not only raised the profile of the Fund and the projects it has supported, but also enabled it to remain a strategic grant programme, linking with regional and national priorities on environmental issues.

6.6 Success is not guaranteed

As LEAF is supporting new and often untried projects, an understanding and pragmatism has been developed among the funding partners that despite every due diligence, projects may not always go to plan. Many of the LEAF projects have had to overcome different hurdles as they have developed, which in some cases has led to delays in project completion or changes to expected outputs/ outcomes. However, all but four of the 83 projects have ultimately been completed and there has been as much learning from these as there is from the ones that go smoothly. Having a dedicated staff member for LEAF has allowed in depth assessment of project risks before approval, and enabled adequate contact with the groups to be maintained during project delivery to be able to capture the learning along the way.

6.7 Sharing the learning

LEAF has become a respected hub of expertise and knowledge in environmental grant making both in the region and nationally. Over time, the level of enquiries have steadily risen both from groups as well other community foundations, grant-makers and stakeholders about specific LEAF projects, general environmental grant making or wider environmental issues. LEAF is providing a signposting function which was an unexpected outcome of the outreach facility of LEAF. For example, Business in the Community approached LEAF for suggestions of environmental projects for HRH The Prince of Wales to visit as part of his START tour in 2010. One of the groups he eventually visited in the north east was a LEAF supported project.

A range of different styles of events targeting different audiences have been trialled since 2006, in order to raise awareness of LEAF, attract new partners and support for LEAF and share the learning coming from projects. By far the most successful have been small scale, informal lunchtime themed seminars (eg micro-renewable energy projects), which have shared learning from LEAF and facilitated networking among groups. Four of these have been delivered to date. Case studies from these seminars have also been made available on the LEAF webpage on the Community Foundation website for those groups who were unable to attend. Small scale 'seeing is believing' days aimed at engaging new donors in environmental grant making, have worked well to convey the wider impacts of typical LEAF projects to potential new donors which is critical to engage a wider audience in environmental grant making.

Participation in external forums, conferences, and engagement with infrastructure/ support organisations has proven an essential part of the outreach function. LEAF has also developed links and external partnerships with respected organisations including the National Trust, Northumberland National Park and WWF-UK, and shared learning with PhD students at two universities.

Membership of the Environmental Funders Network (EFN) an informal network of trusts, foundations and individuals making grants on environmental and conservation issues, in particular has been invaluable in raising the profile of LEAF nationally with other trusts and foundations. A recent funding bid was submitted to Esmée Fairbairn Foundation for LEAF support as a result of initial contact made through EFN, and LEAF and EFN have carried out joint work focused around engaging more community foundations across the UK in environmental grant making. To date over

fifteen other community foundations have been informed about LEAF and its learning.

6.8 Engaging new donors in LEAF/ environmental grant making

A range of different approaches have facilitated new donor interest in LEAF and environmental grant making in the area more generally. This approach has been taken in recognition that attracting new donors specifically to LEAF would take some development time, and that added value could be brought to environmental grant making in the meantime through a range of other opportunities:

a) Targeting existing donors at the Community Foundation – to date at least £70,000 of grant funding from six other donor funds at the Community Foundation has been secured to joint fund LEAF projects, and four donor Funds are now regularly considering small scale environmental projects as part of their regular grant making. The long term aim is to encourage more donor funds at the Community Foundation either to contribute to LEAF directly, or to agree regularly to consider environmental projects as part of their general grant making. Key to attracting these donors has been showing the difference not only environmentally but socially that LEAF projects are making. These donors could play an important role in providing a route for continuation funding of proven LEAF projects. However, as these donor funds typically provide much smaller grants compared to LEAF, this may prove a challenge.

b) Securing corporate donations – LEAF has received donations of £30,578 and sponsorship of £5,000 from eaga plc since 2006. However, it is the gathering momentum around environmental corporate social responsibility and carbon auditing which provides real opportunities for corporate donations to LEAF. Research has shown that to establish LEAF as a credible carbon offset scheme would currently be too costly and resource intensive to be feasible. However, LEAF could provide a facility for businesses to demonstrate how they are supporting local projects which address environmental issues in local communities. Companies have shown interest in donating the calculated financial value of their carbon footprint to LEAF. A donation of £5,000 has been agreed from this route from Muckle LLP.

c) Developing funding partnerships – piloted through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed with the Northumberland National Park Authority Sustainable Development Fund in 2009, this approach has secured at least £32,000 of extra money for LEAF projects and is working as a model of good practice. While not increasing the actual level of environmental grant making overall in the region, a key issue for groups is securing all the match funding for environmental projects so that they can be delivered. This MoU has facilitated joint working, sharing of learning and funding opportunities between the two funds. The simple approach has required minimal additional resources and over a 12 month period, has jointly supported three projects.

d) New Trusts and Foundations – there has been a greater level of interest from larger Trusts and Foundations nationally, than smaller local Trusts which are already making small scale environmental grants of around £500 - £1,000. Discussions to date have indicated that the key attraction of LEAF for national Trusts and Foundations is that it could provide a facility for them to deliver smaller scale, local

environmental projects at arms-length, in a geographical area where they traditionally receive fewer applications.

6.9 Application and monitoring processes

LEAF has quite specific objectives, but to inspire a range of local action, it has avoided being too prescriptive on the type of issue covered by having broad criteria. This has enabled a wide range of projects to be supported, but feedback from groups has indicated that some have struggled with the broad nature of the criteria, and welcomed the proactive support from the dedicated staff post.

Groups have indicated that a more structured, specific LEAF application form, along with a structured monitoring form, would assist groups to consider better how their projects meet LEAF criteria. This would also simplify the collation of future learning from LEAF grant recipients.

Additionally, consideration needs to be given to the period of time that LEAF projects are monitored over. Impacts of environmental projects are not necessarily immediate and are not necessarily captured through the standard Community Foundation monitoring timescales. LEAF partners should agree a budget in the next funding commitment, which covers the costs of external evaluation to review all LEAF projects after a certain period.

6.10 Impact on the Community Foundation

A knock on impact of the Community Foundation being a LEAF partner has been that it has taken steps both to reduce its own environmental impact, and is also encouraging all applicants to the Community Foundation generally to consider ways of reducing theirs. A top tips leaflet has been produced and made available on the website for community groups, in 2007 an internal sustainability working group was established to review the environmental impact of the Community Foundation's internal operations. There is now a formal commitment in the organisation's three year strategy to reducing its carbon footprint, and it is in the process of formalising a sustainability action plan.

7. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this review has been to provide an overview of achievements of and learning from LEAF since it was established in 2006. The scope of this review has only captured a proportion of the learning particularly from the projects on the ground. However, the data collated has enabled conclusions to be made against whether the Fund is meeting its objectives.

7.1 Is LEAF meeting its objectives?

It is fair to say that LEAF is now a proven model of environmental grant-making which is helping to maximise the impact of Fund partners' contributions, to the benefit of environmental projects on the ground. The evaluation has shown that it is successfully meeting all five of its original objectives as outlined in the following section and has much more to offer in the future:

7.1.1 LEAF has enabled more effective, collaborative and focused grant-making on environmental issues.

Having initially been a pilot scheme, LEAF is now firmly established as an effective approach to environmental grant making. It has proven to be a successful model for grant makers interested in the environment, to combine resources to achieve strategic, scaled, and longer term grant making and impacts.

While some of the actual projects supported by LEAF have not always been unique, what is more important is that they have been supported through a collaborative approach. This funding collaboration has enabled an in-depth level of expertise to be developed and applied to grant making which is now being shared with other Trusts and Foundations. In addition, the collaborative model has essentially provided a 'clearing house' for groups seeking support for environmental projects in the area, providing them with vital funding for project ideas which are outside their core day to day activities and/ or would be unlikely to get support from mainstream funding. The approach has also enabled some VCS groups to secure all the funding required to deliver their projects, reducing the need to apply to a range of other grant funders for the match.

7.1.2 LEAF has increased grant-makers knowledge of environmental projects' needs and best practice.

It is evident that LEAF is filling a gap in the funding market and meeting the needs of environmental projects around size and length of grant required. It is providing seed funding and covering costs such as salaries as well as capital items which are not easily supported by other grant makers. The decision to move from a part time post to a full time post dedicated to LEAF management and outreach, has been vital in providing support and signposting to groups, and in enabling learning to be collated shared effectively with other stakeholders.

7.1.3 LEAF has made a positive impact on the environment

At a local level, LEAF projects have had a range of positive impacts, particularly the more practical projects such as local food growing, woodland management and green space development have had positive impacts on the environment. Projects focused more on awareness raising and education have had also had a range of impacts, but these have been less immediate and tangible, but no less important.

Globally, it is important to recognise that LEAF is only a very small part of the wider picture and such a grant programme can only achieve so much. However, small improvements at a local level are what inspire people with the confidence to take action to make a difference, which collectively will impact on wider global issues. In this context, local initiatives are critical, and LEAF is playing a vital part in contributing to this wider agenda.

7.1.4 LEAF has increased education about global environmental issues in local communities.

LEAF has supported projects which cover a wide range of themes and issues, which all tie into wider global issues. However, some caution has to be taken as to the actual likely level of appreciation and understanding of these wider global issues that may have been developed in LEAF beneficiaries over the course of the projects. In most cases, LEAF projects have kept wider global messages such as climate change and resource depletion, very low key and subliminal, as there is a risk that to make them more directly, would disengage a large proportion of beneficiaries.

Where LEAF has been effective however, is through educating people locally about specific issues important to them, which also affect the environment. These could be accessing low cost food, cheaper energy bills or more efficient community buildings. By making it relevant to their day to day lives, and educating and raising awareness about specific issues such as food miles, fresh water pollution, or reducing energy consumption, LEAF projects have provided lasting practical lessons and replicable models which ultimately are increasing education about issues which affect us all globally.

7.1.5 LEAF has increased knowledge of environmental grant-making amongst other charitable trusts.

Particularly as a result of the dedicated LEAF post, experiences and learning have been shared regionally and nationally through a range of networks and stakeholders, and the programme is now seen as a respected centre of expertise in environmental grant-making. Dialogue has been opened with other community foundations about ways of increasing environmental grant making and making it more effective in their areas and LEAF continues to promote further debate and discussion about how best grant makers can contribute to environmental action.

7.2 LEAF after March 2012

This report provides a platform for existing LEAF partners to start to consider options for the future of LEAF, after March 2012. Given the strong evidence base outlined in the report, a Phase 3 of LEAF would not only continue to meet demand for

environmental grant funding in the area, but would take forward the progress made on the outreach and best practice sharing that has been developed in Phase 2.

As part of the discussions, partners may find it useful to consider the following points on LEAF's development:

- Given the learning around the timescales needed to see behaviour change, where do LEAF partners see requests from on-going projects fitting within future LEAF grant making?
- Can we continue to seek only new and innovative ideas?
- How can evaluation be built into the next phase of LEAF?
- Should the establishment of a dedicated renewable energy/ energy efficiency funding fund be investigated, to support the large number of these types of projects?
- Where does LEAF fit within the emerging Big Society?

7.3 Recommendations

The following recommendations are put to the existing LEAF partners for discussion:

- LEAF funding partners agree to commitments for a Phase 3 of LEAF, at least at the current annual contribution levels.
- Continuation of existing LEAF criteria but with the development of a specific LEAF application form and monitoring form to include more specific questions related to the outcomes of LEAF.
- Ensure that areas of lower sub-regional geographical take up of LEAF (South Tyneside, Sunderland and Gateshead) are targeted with proactive support, to ensure that LEAF is impacting on all parts of Northumberland and Tyne and Wear.
- Continuation of certain priority themes for grant support over the coming 12 months including waste and litter, coastal/ marine, development of green spaces and climate change adaptation.
- Consideration to be given to validating LEAF through commissioning an external consultant.
- Investigation into the validity of establishing a scheme which enables businesses and individuals to offset their carbon through donating to LEAF.
- Continued priority given to applications which provide the greatest difference environmentally which as a result improve people's lives.
- Continued proactive and outreach support for the Fund in the form of dedicated post with specific environmental knowledge and background, with backfilling of the fund management activities as levels of grant making rise in order to protect the outreach function.
- Continued focus on securing corporate donations to LEAF.
- Clear agreement on new donor engagement and what this means in terms of fees, having a place on the Committee, and contribution to outreach.

Appendix A - Community Foundation and Area Overview

The Community Foundation Tyne & Wear and Northumberland was established in 1988. Based in Newcastle upon Tyne, we serve the Northumberland and Tyne & Wear area in North East England. We are one of about 55 community foundations within the UK. Globally there are more than 1,440 community foundations in more than 50 countries.

The Community Foundation helps local people and businesses manage their charitable giving. Our vision is: effective giving, thriving communities and enriched lives. We aim to be the hub for community philanthropy in our area - inspiring and supporting giving that strengthens communities and enriches local life. To do this we:

- enable effective giving by people and business;
- support organisations and individuals with money, time and expertise;
- inform and influence issues affecting our communities.

Our governing document is the Memorandum and Articles of a limited company (No. 2273708) and registered charity (No. 700510). We have a membership structure comprising voluntary groups, individuals and trusts, public bodies and businesses each of whom nominate or elect representatives to sit on our Board. The Foundation currently has 26 staff and 16 Board members.

The Community Foundation engages private individuals, families and businesses in giving to communities through establishing their own funds with us. We also help other charities and trusts to give more effectively locally. We run theme and affinity funds, where a number of donors come together around a common cause, and we manage several projects, programmes and partnerships. In total, over 200 separate funds and activities make up the family of the Community Foundation's work. Through the wide range of donors and stakeholders we engage, from April 2009 to January 2010 we made 1,700 grants worth £6m. In 2008-09 the figures were 1,562 grants totalling £5.2m. The vast majority of our grants are for relatively small amounts. 93% of grants in 2008-09 were for under £10,000; 87% were for under £5,000.

The Community Foundation's projects, programmes and partnerships are designed to address gaps in provision, raise awareness of issues or to inform and influence others. LEAF is a key strategic initiative of this type to which the Foundation is currently committed.

Area Overview

The North East region as a whole has the highest per capita emissions of some greenhouse gases of anywhere in the country¹ if energy and industrial production that is exported to other regions is counted. Organisations such as the RDA and ClimateNE, are working to support the region in reducing its energy and industrial emissions as well as encouraging mitigation and adaptation to climate change in the

¹ North East Strategy for the Environment (Environment Forum North East - 2008)

region. ClimateNE for example, brings together a range of public, private and voluntary sector organisations to investigate, inform and advise on the threats and opportunities presented by the impacts of climate change in North East England.

Due to its industrial heritage, the North East has faced, and continues to face, challenges both in addressing environmental damage from previous industries, and reducing carbon emissions from current industries. Some of the region's rural-urban fringe environments have been heavily affected by urban and industrial development which has degraded the quality of the water and landscapes, often in areas where there are high concentrations of social deprivation. Initiatives are continuing to work to address this legacy of damage in conjunction with local communities, improving local environments and reinstating valuable local green space and clean waterways.

In contrast to this, the Community Foundation's area of benefit also boasts a range of areas of exceptional natural beauty, heritage and tranquillity, and contains some of the Europe's most important wildlife sites. The Northumberland Coastal and North Pennines Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site and Northumberland National Park are among the many designated areas which as well as environmental benefits, have significant economic and social benefits.

However, these high profile natural assets in the area can mask challenging countryside issues such as affordable housing, rural deprivation, and social isolation. The higher costs of providing goods and services in rural areas, a dependency on cars due to rural isolation and poor public transport, higher costs of fuel and a reliance on oil and bottled gas due to being off grid, mean that rural communities will need to seek more innovative solutions to reducing their environmental impact and living more sustainably.

The Community Foundation's area of benefit has a population of 1.4m concentrated mainly in urban areas. The distribution between counties is as follows: Northumberland (22% - of which around half are resident in the urban areas of the South East); Sunderland (20%); Newcastle (19%); Gateshead (14%); North Tyneside (14%); South Tyneside (11%). The region's black and minority ethnic (BME) population is growing from a relatively low baseline in 2001 (less than 3%), and looks set to increase significantly as evidenced by the fact that 6% of primary school pupils are now from BME communities

All counties contain areas of multiple deprivation, where over half of children live in poverty, often located alongside much more affluent communities. It has been demonstrated that such inequality reduces life chances for all residents, but impacts most on the poor. For example, in North Tyneside male life expectancy at birth varies by more than 10 years between the richest and poorest wards.

The regional economy is relatively weak which has resulted in higher than UK average rates of low paid and unskilled employment, unemployment and financial exclusion. In the former coalfield areas, there are high incidences of second and third generation unemployment as well as industrial related health issues.

However, the North East is emerging as a key player in the low carbon economy. Employment opportunities through 'green jobs' are being strongly encouraged and supported. The region is already host to organisations that are leading the way on

the low carbon economy, including the National and Renewable Energy Centre (NaREC) which is a major leading centre of excellence in Europe for renewable energy research and development, and Nissan's Sunderland car factory which has been earmarked for the construction of the new Nissan Leaf electric car.

Major investment in the region's infrastructure, including £2.8m to install electric charging points across the region, is supporting the drive for a low carbon economy. It is recognised that additional investment will be needed in order to deliver the low carbon visions embedded within strategies of local authorities and the current Regional Development Agency (RDA).

Appendix B - LEAF Guidelines



The Local Environmental Action Fund

Guidelines for application

Inspiring communities to take local action on global issues

The Local Environmental Action Fund supports projects that address environmental issues through actions at a local level.

We encourage applications from projects that are able to demonstrate the following outcomes:

- Encouraging communities to get involved in environmental activities
- Changing behaviours leading to more local environmental action
- Having a positive impact on the environment
- Sharing learning about the environment with others

Projects should have social and community benefits along with environmental outcomes. While the fund will consider projects focused on any environmental issue, the LEAF Committee are particularly keen in 2010, to receive projects focused on the following key issues:

- Biodiversity & habitat preservation
- Carbon capture and climate change adaptation
- Flooding mitigation and adaptation
- Feasibility studies for environmental projects
- Creating/ developing green spaces
- Litter/ rubbish reduction
- Marine and coastal projects
- Waste and reducing landfill

Size of grants available

Grants of **between £1,000 and £20,000** are available to voluntary and community organisations for **revenue and/or capital projects**. Occasionally grants may be made over more than one year. The grants are available for projects in Tyne & Wear and Northumberland.

When to apply

The fund meets quarterly each year in **March, June, September and December**. Deadlines for applications are the 1st of the month before the fund meeting. Applicants are advised if successful within 1 month of these meetings.

How to apply

You can apply online or download an application form from at the Community Foundation website: www.communityfoundation.org.uk

Please note: As the fund aims to inspire wider local action on environmental issues it is very important that the learning from successful applicants is collected and shared with others. Applicants must therefore demonstrate in their application how they plan to raise awareness of wider environmental issues, and the difference the project will make to environmental issues. Successful applicants will then be asked to provide feedback that demonstrates how they have achieved this over the course of the project.

To discuss a project idea in more detail before you apply or if you have any other queries, contact Katie Wellstead at the Community Foundation – tel. 0191 2220945, email kw@communityfoundation.org.uk

What we are unlikely to support:

- Conservation of charismatic well supported species or non-native species
- Enhancement of habitat for sporting purposes
- Expeditions or fieldwork outside of the UK
- Playground or school ground improvements (unless there is significant wider community use)
- Support for individuals
- Zoos, captive breeding and animal rescue centres
- Beautification competitions (eg Villages in Bloom)
- Generic annual festivals

Appendix C - Job description: Assistant Director (Environment)

Purpose

To lead the Local Environmental Action Fund and to develop the Community Foundation's involvement in environmental issues.

Report: Development Director

Duties

1. To manage the Local Environmental Action Fund (LEAF) and service the LEAF Committee
2. To promote the Fund and wider environmental awareness to voluntary organisations in Tyne & Wear and Northumberland
3. To publicise the Fund and demonstrate good practice
4. To liaise with other grant-making trusts and encourage their involvement in environmental issues
5. To develop greater environmental awareness at the Community Foundation
6. To be a member of local and national networks on environmental issues and environmental grant-making
7. To manage staff if required
8. To undertake other similar Community Foundation duties as required

Person specification

Essential

1. Knowledge and commitment for environmental action
2. Experience of comparable grant making
3. Strong interpersonal skills with people from all walks of life
4. Verbal and written skills to promote the fund and service the Local Action Committee
5. Computer literate and able to be self servicing
6. Commitment to equal opportunities.
7. Strong commitment to the values of the Community Foundation.

Desirable

1. Past experience of working in the environmental field
2. Experience of monitoring and evaluation
3. Evidence of skills in publicity and promotion
4. Experience of organising conferences and seminars
5. Appropriate post graduate qualification or evidence of comparable ability

Appendix D - Statistical analysis of LEAF grant making 2006 – 2010

Outcome	No of applications 06-10	No of applications 06- 09	No of applications 06-08
Grant Agreed	83 (54%)	62 (55%)	30 (55%)
Rejected	70 (46%)	50 (45%)	25 (45%)
Total	153	112	55

Organisations	No of grants approved by Nov 2010	No of grants approved by Nov 09	No of grants approved by March 08
Environmental Orgs	45 (54%)	33 (55%)	20 (66%)
VCS Orgs	38 (46%)	29 (45%)	10 (34%)
Total	83	62	30

Organisation type	Amount Approved by Nov 10	Amount Approved by Nov 09	Amount Approved by March 08
Environmental	£446,194 (57%)	£326,661 (55%)	£204,766 (62%)
VCS	£339,116 (43%)	£269,259 (45%)	£120,287 (38%)
Total	£785,310	£595,920	£325,053

Local Authority	Applications			Amount Requested		
	Total no of apps 06-10	Total no of apps 06-09	Total no of apps 06-08	Total requested 06-10	Total requested 06-09	Total requested 06-08
Northumberland	46 (30%)	34 (30%)	18 (33%)	£474,368	£377,735	£219,529
Newcastle	39 (25%)	31 (28%)	13 (24%)	£403,940	£312,590	£116,466
Gateshead	11 (7%)	9 (8%)	3 (5%)	£149,728	£114,124	£26,223
North Tyneside	24 (16%)	16 (14%)	6 (11%)	£2991,76	£184,384	£107,221
South Tyneside	7 (5%)	5 (5%)	4 (7%)	£54,563	£46,588	£41,816
Sunderland	12 (8%)	7 (6%)	6 (11%)	£152,627	£75,578	£52,063
Area wide	14 (9%)	10 (9%)	7 (13%)	£173,223	£107,347	£82,008
	153	112	55	£1,707,625	£1,213,346	£645,326

Local Authority area of benefit	Total Grants Awarded			Grants Awarded		
	No of grants 06-10	No of Grants 06-09	No of grants 06-08	Total amount awarded 06-10	Total amount awarded 06-09	Total amount awarded 06-08
Northumberland	25 (30%)	18 (29%)	10 (33%)	£232,085 (30%)	£201,308 (34%)	£132,204 (41%)
Newcastle	21 (26%)	20 (32%)	8 (27%)	£143,578 (18%)	£131,223 (22%)	£32,569 (10%)
Gateshead	9 (11%)	5 (8%)	1 (3%)	£89,264 (11%)	£53,512 (9%)	£13,500 (4%)
North Tyneside	10 (12%)	7 (11%)	3 (10%)	£76,246 (10%)	£53,400 (9%)	£24,780 (8%)
South Tyneside	2 (2%)	2 (3%)	2 (7%)	£20,000 (3%)	£20,000 (3%)	£20,000 (6%)
Sunderland	5 (6%)	3 (5%)	3 (10%)	£88,106 (11%)	£65,363 (11%)	£65,363 (20%)
Area wide	11 (13%)	7 (11%)	3 (10%)	£136,031 (17%)	£71,114 (12%)	£36,637 (11%)
Total	83	62	30	£785,310	£595,920	£325,053

Issue	Applications			Grants Awarded						UK data
	No of Apps to Nov 2010	No of Apps to Nov 2009	No of apps to Mar 08	No of grants to Nov 10	No of grants to Nov 09	No of grants to Mar 08	Amount Awarded Nov 10	Amount Awarded Nov 09	Amount awarded Mar 08	Green Grants %
Agriculture	22 (14%)	16 (14%)	6 (11%)	8 (10%)	7 (12%)	4 (13%)	£63,857 (8%)	£47,265 (8%)	£27,132 (8%)	18%
Biodiversity & Species Preservation	11 (7%)	6 (6%)	2 (4%)	8 (10%)	4 (6%)	1 (3%)	£79,484 (10%)	£45,446 (8%)	£9,106 (3%)	35%
Climate & Atmosphere	8 (5%)	7 (6%)	4 (7%)	5 (6%)	4 (6%)	2 (7%)	£17,117 (2%)	£12,117 (2%)	£6,690 (2%)	2%
Coastal and marine	2 (1%)	1 (1%)	1 (2%)	1 (1%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	£17,975 (2%)	£0 (0%)	£0 (0%)	4%
Consumption and waste	17 (11%)	12 (11%)	5 (9%)	7 (8%)	5 (8%)	2 (7%)	£60,715 (8%)	£38,335 (6%)	£11,890 (4%)	1%
Energy	27 (18%)	21 (19%)	12 (12%)	14 (17%)	10 (16%)	4 (13%)	£156,128 (20%)	£125,928 (21%)	£50,662 (16%)	3%
Fresh water	10 (7%)	9 (8%)	4 (7%)	6 (7%)	6 (10%)	2 (7%)	£56,745 (8%)	£56,745 (10%)	£19,200 (6%)	3%
Multi-issue work	18 (12%)	10 (9%)	5 (9%)	8 (10%)	6 (10%)	4 (13%)	£117,796 (15%)	£93,356 (16%)	£78,863 (23%)	14%
Sustainable communities	18 (12%)	15 (13%)	10 (18%)	13 (16%)	11 (18%)	8 (27%)	£121,332 (15%)	£110,832 (19%)	£96,132 (30%)	4%
Terrestrial ecosystems	8 (5%)	5 (4%)	3 (5%)	7 (8%)	4 (6%)	2 (7%)	£61,713 (8%)	£40,611 (7%)	£22,892 (7%)	8%
Toxics and pollution	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	£0 (0%)	£0 (0%)	£0 (0%)	£0 (0%)	£0 (0%)	£0 (0%)	3%
Trade and finance	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	£0 (0%)	£0 (0%)	£0 (0%)	£0 (0%)	£0 (0%)	£0 (0%)	3%
Transport	12 (8%)	10 (9%)	3 (5%)	6 (7%)	5 (8%)	1 (3%)	£32,448 (4%)	£24,895 (3%)	£2,486 (1%)	2%
Total	153	112	55	83	62	30	£785,310	£595,920	£325,053	100%

Appendix E - List of Grants Awarded by LEAF Dec 06 – Sept 10

- **Tynedale Agricultural Society – £5,000** towards running costs for a showcase exhibition on 'Recycling, Sustainability and Conservation' at the annual Northumberland County Show in Corbridge.
- **Wansbeck Community Empowerment Network – £14,535** to deliver support and training for local groups who wish to take measures to reduce their carbon footprint.
- **Community Environmental Educational Developments – £20,000** to work with local groups to deliver environmental improvements to urban green spaces within Sunderland.
- **Tarset 2050 – £5,290** to carry out a carbon footprint exercise in Tarset and to explore the use of renewable technologies.
- **Gateshead Youth Organisation Council – £13,500** to work with young people to develop 'environmental' resource packs, including videos that can be used by community development workers across the area/
- **Pennywell Youth Project – £12,040** to work with young people to develop an area of neglected land, and to raise awareness of climate change issues.
- **Groundwork Northumberland – £14,196** to deliver a food miles project.
- **Carbon Neutral North East – £5,207** to purchase a portable exhibition display that educates people on how to sustain the natural environment.
- **National Energy Action – £18,140** to install air source heat pump technology in an old community building in Powburn, Alnwick.
- **Whitfield Parish Hall - £7,987** towards the installation of a renewable energy heating system in the community hall.
- **North Tyneside Friends of the Earth - £8,000** running costs for a new advice centre, to provide expert advice and signposting on climate change issues.
- **Northumberland Wildlife Trust - £9,106** for the installation of interpretation boards and a 'green' roof on the visitors centre at Hauxley nature Reserve.
- **Berwick upon Tweed Community Development Trust - £48,690** over three years to employ a Project Development Worker to bring together local groups, provide advice and support for groups and individuals wishing to deliver environmental projects, or reduce their carbon footprint.
- **McGowan Court Garden Project - £7,935** to develop a community garden with composting and recycling facilities at a mental health project in Byker.
- **Newcastle Community Green Festival - £3,000** towards running costs for a high profile local 'green' event.
- **Groundwork South Tyneside - £15,000** towards a Green Gym project.
- **Groundwork South Tyneside - £5,000** for a riverbank improvement project working with local volunteers.
- **Newcastle Healthy City - £8,690** to fund a feasibility study into recycling for community groups and schools in the city.
- **The Cyrenians - £1,000** towards their mini-plot community allotment project
- **Wideopen Forum - £7,892** towards the creation of an accessible footpath at Watery Gates Nature Reserve
- **Tyne Rivers Trust - £14,200** towards project officer costs to develop a Riverwatch project for volunteers.
- **Berwick Community Development Trust - £3,200** for a Food Waste Feasibility Study.

- ❑ **Community Environmental Educational Developments - £33,323** towards its Green Wellbeing project.
- ❑ **Kids Kabin - £1,400** to support an Ecovision roadshow.
- ❑ **Middlesbrough Environment City - £13,290** to support a Climate Change Aware project working with local community groups to identify the impacts of climate change on their organisations.
- ❑ **Newcastle Green Festival - £4,100** towards a Low Impact Living Area.
- ❑ **Scotswood Natural Community Garden - £4,001** to run a food growing pilot project with local primary schools.
- ❑ **Wark Recreational Charity - £10,000** towards its ground source heat pump project.
- ❑ **Federation of City Farms and Community Garden - £3,827** towards training and support for organisations to respond to climate change.
- ❑ **Friends of Kingston Park Green - £7,719** towards new verging and path development.
- ❑ **Linskill and North Tyneside Community Development Trust - £420** towards their 'On ya bike, cycle for life' project.
- ❑ **Meadow Well Connected - £20,000** to support the costs of installing equipment which displays data on renewable technology, enabling them to then upload and share this information on their new website.
- ❑ **Northumberland Wildlife Trust - £4,493** towards set up costs for a new volunteer programme based around the south Gosforth nature reserve.
- ❑ **West Denton Allotment Association - £8,505** to enable the group to install an accessible compost toilet on the allotment.
- ❑ **Wor Hoose Community project - £1,621** towards a community gardening club.
- ❑ **Living Streets (The Pedestrians Association) - £16,650** towards a Secondary walk to school campaign in the North east. This is a 2 year grant.
- ❑ **Northern Stage (Theatrical Productions) Ltd - £1,600** to fund an energy audit and carbon footprint exercise to its building and activities.
- ❑ **Scotswood Natural Community Garden - £10,000** to provide general funding support for the organisation to develop and become sustainable.
- ❑ **St Chad's Community Project - £1,512** to provide equipment for Family Gardening Project.
- ❑ **Tyneside Cyrenians - £16,000** to fund a combined heat and power unit at its hostel, Elliot House.
- ❑ **Whitley Bay Community Allotment & Gardens - £1,200** towards solar panels for community allotment.
- ❑ **Allenheads Trust Ltd - £1,500** to fund a sustainable water supply feasibility study.
- ❑ **Stonham (part of Home Group Ltd) - £5,000** to enable them to run an environmental awareness campaign amongst their tenants.
- ❑ **Tees and Durham Energy Advice Company Ltd (TADEA) - £5,000** towards developing a Low Carbon Communities project in Belford.
- ❑ **Wor Hoose Community project - £7,940** as part funding of a food share project in the Walker area to reduce food waste and at the same time addressing food poverty issues.
- ❑ **VONNE - £4,000** to provide match funding towards consultancy costs to develop a 5 year business plan to develop and enhance environmental volunteering in the region.

- ❑ **Literary and Philosophical Society- £2,249** towards bike racks and associated fittings and fixtures as part of a wider sustainability plan for the building.
- ❑ **Recycle y' Bike £3,180** to enable the organisation to develop an cycle training and maintenance outreach service.
- ❑ **Byker Bridge Housing Association - £10,000** towards a composting project at Ouseburn Farm and at some of the BBHA residencies.
- ❑ **Tyne Rivers Trust - £10,000** to help towards the costs of their Senior Project Officer for 2 years.
- ❑ **Stocksfield Cricket Club - £10,295** to support a grey water storage facility which will help to provide water for watering the pitches.
- ❑ **Gateshead CAB - £20,000** towards air source heat pumps and smart meter technology as part of a new sustainable building.
- ❑ **National Trust, Gibside – £17,000** over 3 years towards their Sowing and Growing Together project.
- ❑ **Amberley Community Primary School - £7,000** to help towards their sustainable energy project.
- ❑ **Tyne Rivers Trust £15,700** for monitoring and evaluation costs associated with a wider 5 year catchment wide environmental enhancement project.
- ❑ **Friends of Red Kites - £1,500** to fund set up costs of the group who plan to raise awareness of Red Kites and wider conservation and biodiversity issues.
- ❑ **Flexigraze - £24,840** towards the costs of establishing a community grazing project over two years.
- ❑ **North Sunderland and Seahouses Development Trust - £10,000** towards their 'Young Rangers on the Coast 'Quarryfields' project.
- ❑ **Tyne & Wear Museums Development Trust - £10,000** to support them running a series of Wildlife Exploration Days.
- ❑ **Elsdon Village Hall - £12,066** towards the cost of installing ground source heat pump technology.
- ❑ **Revive Enterprise - £12,000** to enable it to continue to expand as a furniture recycling service for low income households.
- ❑ **National Energy Action - £19,602** to run a energy efficiency awareness campaign using drama and role playing in schools in the north east.
- ❑ **Alnwick and District Bee Keeping Association - £16,960** towards a project which will raise awareness among the wider public about the importance of bees.
- ❑ **Groundwork Northumberland - £5,303** towards a project working with young people to educate them about how they can support bees.
- ❑ **National Trust, Gibside - £16,592** additional support towards their Sowing and Growing Together project.
- ❑ **Blue Watch Youth Centre - £7,463** towards a 12 month cycle maintenance training project.
- ❑ **Northumberland Wildlife Trust - £5,000** towards a volunteer watch project.
- ❑ **Transition Tynedale - £1,200** towards establishing a new website and IT training.
- ❑ **Fenham Association of Residents – £9,160** to transform wasteland into an environmental project for the local community.
- ❑ **Prudhoe Community Partnership – £6,247** towards a community engagement project for Cockshot Dene Woodland.
- ❑ **Wylam Green Street - £2,000** towards an electric vehicle charging point

- ❑ **Northern Stage - £5,000** towards an interactive art production on climate change.
- ❑ **Project Northumberland - £6,752** towards a 12 month project which will provide education on renewable energy sources for young people in Newcastle.
- ❑ **Northumberland Wildlife Trust - £6,775** towards their 'Beequest' project over 12 months.
- ❑ **Redhouse Farm Allotment Association – £846** for a small PV panel.
- ❑ **Gosforth Resident's Association – £12,355** to enable the group to transform two grey flagged areas into viable green spaces.
- ❑ **Community Environmental Educational Developments – £15,280** towards its 12 month Nature Mill Project in Fulwell.
- ❑ **Killingworth Community Consortium – £10,000** for a 12 month carbon foot-printing project supporting different households to make sustainable changes.
- ❑ **ORCA – £17,975** for its 'Your Seas' marine conservation and awareness project over three years.
- ❑ **Mobex NE – £10,380** to enable them to support young people over 12 months to learn about and address litter problems in rivers.
- ❑ **Bardon Mill and Henshaw Village Hall Group – £2,500** towards their Woodland Management project.

Appendix F - Examples of LEAF projects and impacts

Wark Recreational Charity - a rural community which received funding towards installing a ground source heat pump as part of a range of energy efficiency improvements in the sports club building. It overcame a range of hurdles to deliver the project. Over 150 people have already benefitted from the project, and a wide range of groups are now booking the venue for meetings and events.

The group has learnt a lot of lessons along the way including considering the wider efficiency of the building first, planning issues, budgeting 15% for unforeseen costs, and understanding the grant drawdown conditions as these may impact on cashflows. It is very keen to share its learning and inspire others to take the step towards renewable technologies. As well as sharing learning at LEAF seminars, it is now working with the Energy Savings Trust, Northumberland National park, the Mid Tyne Trust and several suppliers and contractors to establish a renewable energy open day, and has provided more information on the heat pump to visiting sports teams and external groups.

The Cyrenians – a registered charity providing homeless people with opportunities to improve their lives. It received support for its horticultural project in the west end of Newcastle involving 16 mini-plots of 5 ft x 5 ft. As these are a manageable size for first time growers, it has been a real success, with the mini-plots now oversubscribed. By focusing the service users initially on getting their first crop, the project is inspiring people to take small steps to grow their own, and showing them that by using recycled tools, containers etc, they can also do so inexpensively.

Groundwork North East – support for their Food Miles and Healthy Eating Initiative has helped them engage over 300 people in the North Northumberland area in local food growing and cooking activities. Focusing on four schools and three community groups, Groundwork has incorporated visits to local farms to learn about sustainable farming and food miles. Two of the schools now have permanent vegetable growing areas and one has also planted an orchard to grow its own fruit.

Belford Energy Saving Together (BEST) Low Carbon Communities Project – this local action group has helped the village of 1,000 people cut its carbon footprint and reduce its energy bills. BEST is working to deliver a carbon reduction action plan for the local community which aims to reduce the village's carbon emissions by 10% by December 2010. A range of activities have so far taken place to promote energy awareness including installation of low energy Christmas lights, energy questionnaires, exhibitions, eco eye energy monitor loans and the production of a short film made by the local residents. Enthusiasm, clear objectives, small activities and keeping things fun have all helped the group make this project a success, and to be shortlisted for two awards at the Evening Chronicle Go Green Awards 2010.

Community Environmental Educational Developments – funding for its Green Wellbeing Project has helped the group successfully engage with and support 18 different community groups in Sunderland to help them develop individual environmental projects that meet local need. These include creating back yard growing areas at a community advice facility, which has led to the development of a basic cooking skills project using the fresh produce, community wildlife areas,

community allotments, sensory gardens and recycling projects. CEED estimates that it has worked with nearly 380 individuals during the 12 month project.

Allenheads Trust – received funding towards a study into the feasibility of installing a borehole to enable the Trust to be self sufficient in water consumption. While the study showed that the borehole was feasible, the group has not yet made any progress with taking it forward as it hasn't been able to secure permission from the landowner, and the Trust's Committee members started to have concerns around their liabilities in the project. It recommends that other groups considering a similar scheme should cover these two points well before any feasibility work is carried out.

Wor Hoose Food Share project – a food share project in Walker in the east end of Newcastle to reduce food waste and address food poverty issues. The project is distributing fresh bread packs donated by two local Greggs bakery shops on six days a week to 85 people in need per day, including four pensioners who receive home deliveries as they are too frail to walk to the project office. 50 individuals also benefit from weekly food packs from donations of tinned, dairy, and fresh fruit and vegetables from Sainsbury's, Morrison's and Brake's. A carrier bag recycling point is encouraging people using the scheme to think more about the environment. To date, 35 tonnes of bread, 18 tonnes of produce from supermarkets, and four tonnes of fruit and vegetables has been used which would otherwise have gone into landfill.

Stocksfield Cricket Club - a grey water storage project in western Northumberland to provide water for watering the pitches and will eventually also be used to flush the clubhouse toilets. A 27,000 litre tank was installed and since May 2010 has already enabled the Club to recycle several thousand litres of water, and it estimates that it will reduce its water rates bill by at least £500 per year. The group overcame issues around planning and timing which impacted on costings, and is keen to share these lessons with other visiting teams who enquire about the system. The local school also visited the project to learn more about water recycling.

Appendix G – Research Methodology

The following data has been researched and collated to support the production of this report:

- Statistical analysis of applications and grants awarded from 2006 to present to provide an understanding of application outcomes, types of organisations, geographical spread of organisations, project issues and approaches and beneficiary groups.
- One to one interviews with six LEAF grant recipients, from a mixture of environmental and non-environmental VCS organisations, covering 11 LEAF projects.
- Survey emailed to an additional 25 grant recipients, with a 50% response rate.
- Analysis of the Environmental Funders Network report 'Where the Green Grants Went 3' to compare LEAF grant making trends with national data on environmental grant making.
- Collation of feedback and learning from LEAF stakeholders and partners.
- Review of all feedback forms received from grant recipients since 2006.