

The Cedarwood Trust (Charity No. 1100530, Company No. 4855747) was set up by local residents NTC and the Anglican Diocese in 1980 as a Pastoral care organisation: “to promote the benefits of the inhabitants of the Meadow Well Estate, North Shields without distinction of sex or of political, religious or other opinions, by associating the local authorities, voluntary organisations and inhabitants in a common effort to advance education and to provide facilities in the interests of social welfare for recreation and leisure time occupations, with the object of improving the conditions of life for the said inhabitants.” Run by a Board of unpaid Trustees, operational management is delegated to a CEO; an experienced Youth and Community development Manager. In recent years the Trust has increased its emphasis on community development work arising from needs identified by local research and national best practice, for which it has won awards. There are 3 core staff; with others appointed to initiate/support specific time-limited grant-funded projects. Centrally located on the Estate, it is the only facility of its kind in the area and therefore a valued focal point for the community. Our vision: **a vibrant, sustainable community where individuals support each other towards their own potentials. A place where everyone is valued for who they are.**

What we do: Working in partnership with a range of voluntary and statutory organisations we tackle poverty and social exclusion. Specifically we currently focus on -

- ❖ . facilitating parenting/child care, development and health/ school preparedness/play skills in adults and play experiences for children and parents/ visit supervision
- ❖ . increasing aspiration/education/ confidence building/ CV and IT training by conversation/coaching/ formal and informal experiences and volunteering opportunities
- ❖ . providing direct debt/benefit advice/ accompaniment where essential to courts and other statutory / encouraging and facilitating membership of a credit union
- ❖ . raising community concerns: anti-social behaviour, drugs, gangs, vandalism, graffiti, litter, contacting relevant authorities/ enabling anonymity
- ❖ . community cohesion: bringing together, valuing, communicating, diffusing, representing, staging shared events and activities for old and young
- ❖ . poverty: providing food/lunches/breakfasts/cooking skills and qualifications/soup for the elderly/housebound/ clothing- heaters/ growing and eating healthy food
- ❖ . crisis support: personal/financial/ practical/emotional/engagement with authority/ contact police/ mental health units when necessary emergency supplies and support
- ❖ . loneliness/isolation/boredom: leisure and learning activities, enabling socialising, enabling the development of friendships
- ❖ . providing a base for alcohol anon/ narcotics anon/ smoking cessation
- ❖ . research and representation: to ensure underlying issues are recognised and addressed, by statutory bodies nationally and locally.

How we do it: Unlike other organisations locally, we provide direct, personal, timely problem solving engagement – not just sign-posting. This requires Face-to-face work - time consuming but more effective. We are known, trusted and respected by users for taking a holistic approach in a simple, non-judgemental way, devoid of jargon and with respect for the individual. There is no one formula. We adapt to the circumstances, and the needs of individual. Beyond service provision - our aim is to develop individuals to take responsibility for their lives and their community, by enabling and empowering, through confidence and skills building. The starting point is often by tackling fundamental issues of poverty, personal or financial crisis. Our relationships our long-standing, accepting, and constant – particularly where deep-seated problems exist.

How the Meadow Well Centre will strengthen this work: Additional space would enable us to increase the range, volume, and hours of our work with the effect of working in more depth with groups and individuals. Multiple benefits will accrue: increased service for a greater number; capacity to focus on additional recognised issues; a site for additional local services to support/ improve take up; more facilities/activities f.ex: gym/bike maintenance/ pop-up cinema/ leisure classes/ self-help groups/support groups; a base for greater “formal” training opportunities to gain qualifications, and informal training being a base for more volunteering/ experience gathering. The consequence will be to increase employment opportunities, child development and family welfare. Using the venue to bring other community activities to the Estate, will reduce insularity and challenge long-ingrained prejudices and perceptions held by the wider community to the detriment of residents. Increased volume/range, will increase funding/sustainability.

Funding/financials: currently funded by multiple sources, and financially sound and growing, we will continue to work in a predominantly project/programme focussed way with each programme attracting funds in its own right with its own objectives and required outcomes. Including compatible paying tenants - whose objectives will include specific benefits for residents: Dyslexia North East; Maritime Volunteers, Radio Northumberland – as well as provide revenue. Professional management of the building/facilities will ensure maintenance and improvement of the asset. We currently await written confirmation from a National organisation prepared to back the Meadow Well Centre move, precisely because of the purpose and range, and acknowledged track-record of the work of the Trust.