

CUMBRIA COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

‘People have helped me, so I do what I can to help others’

Cumbria Community Foundation helps philanthropic individuals and businesses by managing their funds to put something back into their chosen community. Each month, we'll introduce you to a different fund and highlight how the money is helping people across the county. This month, we focus on the Winter Warmth Fund

Every year 300 more people die in our county because of the effects of cold weather, but the warm generosity of others gives older people financial support towards their fuel bills, meaning they can stay warmer and healthier in the coldest times of the year.

Inspired by people who wanted to recycle their Winter Fuel Payment, the Winter Warmth Fund was established five years ago and in this time has raised more than £220,000. The fund now sees donations big and small from individuals, businesses and philanthropic donors.

All the money raised is used for the direct benefit of older people who are suffering because of fuel poverty. The money supports those most in need of help and makes sure they can afford to stay warm, eat well and remain mobile.

Older people who need extra support - living alone or feeling isolated, finding it hard to afford their fuel bills, unable to go out or reluctant to let others see their living conditions.

Ellen, 74, from Keswick received a grant last year and said: "I realised how cold it got when I stayed up through the night looking after my husband before he died. There must be loads of people in that position. I decided I should do something to help keep myself warm and so I crocheted a blanket to put on my knees or round my



Ellen with Cumbria Community Foundation's Chief Executive Andy Beeforth

shoulders. Then I made one for my neighbour and it kept her warm, so I have kept going. I've now made 16 blankets. I buy one ball of wool at a time - there's a shop in Penrith which sells it cheap. It gives me great pleasure when I finish a whole blanket; I look at it and think 'that's someone else who is going to be warm.'

"People have helped me, so I do what I can to help others. The Winter Warmth Grant made a big difference; I was able to leave the heating on for longer."

With rising fuel bills and the prospect of another cold winter, older and vulnerable people are at risk. Anyone can contribute to the Winter Warmth Fund by contacting the Foundation.

If you would like to know how to apply for a grant or create a grant making fund, please visit the Foundation's website www.cumbriafoundation.org or call 01900 825760.

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