

PRESS RELEASE

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DARLINGTON CHAMPIONS TO BOOST LONG TERM FUNDS

A team of Darlington's biggest business leaders have joined forces to launch a major campaign to boost charity funds in the borough for decades to come. Darlington Champions, run by County Durham Foundation already has the backing of big borough businesses who are urging other firms, organisations and individuals to join them.

The first Darlington Champions, who have already contributed over £300,000 are Peter Rowley, chief executive of Darlington Building Society, David Osborne the new managing director of shower manufacturer Roman Ltd, Tom Roberts of BAT (British American Tobacco), Alasdair MacConachie OBE DL, managing director of Vauxhall car dealership Sherwoods, Eddie Humphries, general manager Lingfield Point and David Brown of law firm Latimer Hinks.

Joined by County Durham Foundation chief executive Gillian Stacey DL plus chairman and former North East Business Man of the Year Bernard Robinson OBE DL, they are encouraging everyone to come forward and ensure that the borough has the financial support it needs to create a healthy community for its residents.

There are four levels of Darlington Champions - Bronze, Silver, Gold and Platinum. You can qualify as a Bronze Champion for as little as £100 and, unlike donations to other charities, you can choose how much you wish to be involved and who receives your support.

There is also a special incentive for people to join early, as British American Tobacco will match pound-for-pound every donation made by new Platinum Champions up to £150,000, on a first come first served basis.

All Darlington Champions qualify for a range of benefits, including invitations to a special Awards dinner next year. Bronze and Silver Champions can choose to support good causes from five categories including children and young people and education. Gold and Platinum Champions can choose the good causes themselves from a range of projects that fit their requirements, suggested by County Durham Foundation. The foundation will even hunt out good causes for them and deal with requests for financial support sent to them direct.

Gillian Stacey, chief executive of County Durham Foundation, said: “As a Darlington Champion, you will join a team of business professionals and local people who are already helping to make Darlington one of the most exciting places to live in the North East.

“Our aim is to encourage local people and business to help local people. By coordinating our efforts, and revealing to you great projects and good causes that you wouldn’t find yourself, Darlington Champions will guarantee that your support is going to where it is really needed, and where it can make the most impact.”

As well as signing up to become a Darlington Champion the foundation is appealing to businesses and organisations to agree to help organise special lunches. Peter Rowley of Darlington Building Society who will be hosting a lunch in the New Year made a direct appeal to businesses and individuals. He said: “Darlington Champions is an innovative and worthwhile initiative that allows us to further enrich the communities of which we are part and proud to serve. We are delighted to be a Platinum Darlington Champion, and hope that you will join us and become one too.”

Tom Roberts of British American Tobacco, said: “We have supported County Durham Foundation to set up the Darlington Champions scheme as part of our legacy for Darlington. We wanted to support projects that could make a significant impact, on people and communities, and the Darlington Champions scheme seems set to do that. Although we are no longer manufacturing in the town, we hope this will encourage businesses and local people to work together to help ensure Darlington continues to be a great place in which to live and work.”

Alasdair MacConachie of Sherwood’s of Darlington, said: “Working together to make Darlington a fantastic place for everyone, whatever their social background, ethnicity or economic situation is something we can all aspire to. I cannot think of a better way to do this, and I encourage you all to join me and become a Darlington Champion.

“County Durham Foundation, which runs Darlington Champions, is inspirational in its management, motivation and encouragement to local groups in need. We became involved with them and Darlington Champions, because of the experience and direction it can offer businesses that are community orientated.”

David Brown of Latimer Hinks, added: “Everyone should join this initiative, and we will be encouraging other companies like ourselves to become Champions. It’s very simple to join, and as Gold Darlington Champions, we are proud to know that our support is going to really deserving good causes of our choice.”

Eddie Humphries of Lingfield Point, adds: “Lingfield Point is an integral part of the employment and social scene in Darlington. We are very pleased to be a Platinum Darlington Champion to help provide support and funds to enable disadvantaged people in Darlington to have a real chance of changing their lives.”

To find out how to become a Darlington Champion call Mel or Gillian on 0191 383 0055 or join online at www.darlingtonchampions.org.uk.

ENDS

Editors Notes:

1. This year County Durham Foundation is celebrating its 10th anniversary during which time it has handed out almost ten million pounds in cash lifelines to good causes. The foundation is gaining momentum with 60 per cent of the £10 million grants given having been distributed over the last three years and its endowment fund now stands at £5 million – up £2 million in the last two years.

The aim is to grow that investment fund to £10 million by 2008 with the help of local and national donors. Foundation trustees hope the Darlington Champions campaign will go a long way in helping them reach that goal.

2. As the Darlington Champions grows, plans are in place to hold an annual dinner event to celebrate the people and organisations that have benefited from the scheme and to recognise their good work. An overall winner, plus runners up, will each receive a Darlington Champions Award.
3. Over the last ten years County Durham Foundation and its fund holders have helped 3,400 groups and 1,450 people in County Durham and Darlington to achieve their goals through receiving a grant. Grants have ranged from the largest of £233,000 to the smallest which was just £10.
4. Darlington Champions qualify for the following incentives:

Bronze (minimum £100 donation)

- Choice of theme to channel grants.
- One complimentary seat at the Darlington Champions Dinner.
- Free Darlington Champions pin badge.

- Free, regular email bulletins.
- Company name on Darlington Champions website.
- Use of Darlington Champions Bronze logo.

Silver (minimum £500 donation)

- Choice of theme to channel grants.
- Two complimentary seats to the Darlington Champions Dinner.
- Two free Darlington Champions pin badges.
- Free, regular email bulletins.
- Company name and logo with company quote on Darlington Champions website.
- Use of grant pictures and stories for internal communication and in company literature.
- Use of Darlington Champions Silver logo.

Gold (minimum £1,000 donation)

- You can choose the projects you fund.
- Four complimentary seats to the Darlington Champions Dinner.
- Four free Darlington Champions pin badges.
- Free, regular email bulletins.
- Darlington Champions will handle your requests for charitable donations, you just forward them to us.
- Company name and logo and 100 word personalised story with picture on Darlington Champions website.
- Participant in media campaign.
- Use of grant pictures and stories for internal communication and in company literature.

- Use of Darlington Champions Gold logo.
- Opportunity at the Darlington Champions Dinner for display stand, and sponsor giveaways for gift bags.
- Opportunity to link from your website to the Darlington Champions site.

Platinum (named endowment fund - minimum £25,000 donation).

The endowment is professionally invested and the interest and any capital growth distributed each year as grants. You choose the name of the fund and the level of branding, publicity and involvement in decision-making. You can also pay by instalments over a number of years, with full tax advantages or even give shares, property or leave a legacy.

Darlington Champions Platinum Incentives:

- Due to the generosity of British American Tobacco, we are delighted to offer businesses and individuals the opportunity to double up the value of their Platinum fund. This fantastic opportunity is offered on a first-come, first-served basis.
- Full page profile on the Darlington Champions website.
- Participant in media campaign.
- Use of grant pictures and stories for internal communication and in company literature.
- Use of Darlington Champions Platinum logo.
- Opportunity at the Darlington Champions Dinner for display stand, and sponsor giveaways for gift bags.
- Twelve seats (a table) at the Darlington Champions Dinner.
- Twelve Darlington Champions pin badges.
- Darlington Champions will handle your requests for charitable donations, you just forward them to us.
- Full page profile on the rolling supporters Darlington Champions website.
- Free, regular email bulletins.

- Main participant in media campaign.
- Use of grant pictures and stories for internal communication and in company literature.
- Use of Darlington Champions Platinum logo.
- Opportunity at the Darlington Champions Dinner for display stand
- Sponsor and present an Award at the Darlington Champions Dinner.
- Opportunity to link from your website to the Darlington Champions site.