

PRESS RELEASE

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CLIENT: COUNTY DURHAM FOUNDATION

CASH BOOST FOR DARLINGTON WIDOWS GROUP

A widows group is being thrown a social lifeline, thanks to a grant from Darlington Champions, run by County Durham Foundation.

The money – given to the Association of North East Widows (ANEW) – will support women facing the double blow of losing their husbands and then potentially being isolated at home.

ANEW, which offers “sincere friendships and gentle support” will subsidise transport to get members with disabilities from Darlington along to the charity’s regular meetings and events including trips away, Sunday lunches, bingo sessions and talks by guest speakers.

Receiving a Darlington Champions grant means a lot to the group, explains ANEW founder secretary Mrs Barbara Wilkes: “This money will be so helpful to our work.

“Losing one’s husband is a huge trauma for our members, but for those who are also disabled, life becomes doubly difficult. Just getting out of the house can be a major challenge for them – and that can increase their sense of isolation.

“The group is not a bereavement service but more a social support network for people coming through the pain of the loss of a loved one. This grant means we can help to bring some sunshine back into their lives, because our aim is to ensure that widows do not become forgotten people just when they most need the company of others.”

County Durham Foundation has spent ten years funding good causes in the community and recently launched Darlington Champions, which aims to encourage more local people and businesses to help fund local good causes.

The foundation hopes its Darlington Champions will help boost its endowment fund from £5 million to £10 million by 2010 and is appealing to more businesses, organisations and individuals to get involved.

Gillian Stacey, chief executive of County Durham Foundation, said: "The grant to ANEW was relatively small but is a good example of how the Darlington Champions can make a difference at every level."

ANEW has already built up a strong network of widows across the Darlington area, many of them pensioners, and now boasts a 60-strong membership, with a five-member management committee.

The group holds fortnightly afternoon meetings at Darlington In-door Bowling Centre in the town, with 40 members on average attending each get-together.

If you are a widow in the Darlington area and would like more information about ANEW, please contact Mrs Wilkes on 01325 482 887.

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For more Press information, contact Andy Barker at Results Network PR, on 0191 519 7268 or 07855 352 303.