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## Newcastle Building Society Grant Helps Keep Coastwatch Volunteers On The Lookout

A group of dedicated volunteers who give up their time to help keep the Northumberland coast as safe as possible have been awarded a grant of £566 by Newcastle Building Society to help support their work.

Sea surveillance charity Coastwatch provides a visual and radio watch along the coastline from Eyemouth to Seahouses on Wednesdays, Saturdays and Sunday every week.

Based in a look-out tower at Magdalene Fields Golf Course at Berwick, the group was founded five years ago, and its 18 volunteer watchkeepers work in concert with HM Coastguard with the aim of providing a safer coast for vessels, cliff and beach users.

Coastwatch members regularly visit local schools to give educational talks on sea safety, and also provide safety information and weather reports to holidaymakers on the local caravan site.

The Newcastle funding will be used to purchase some of the specialist equipment that the group uses, including binoculars, aerials, solar panels and radar equipment.

Coastwatch founder Lesley Wooler, who set up the group when he moved to the area, says: "We obviously get a lot of people using what is a wonderful coastline, both on and offshore, and safety isn't always at the front of people's minds when they're having fun on the beach or in the water."

“We deal with a wide range of different incidents, from simply providing useful information about the area and checking that beachside lifesaving equipment is in place through to helping people avoid potentially dangerous situations, such as rising tides that they haven’t noticed, and assisting the emergency services in full rescue situations.

“The look-out tower was derelict when we took it over and needed to be entirely renovated and re-equipped to meet modern safety standards, and the equipment that we use is both specialized and expensive, so the grant support we’ve received from the Newcastle is extremely welcome.”

Nicola Green, Corporate Communications Manager at Newcastle Building Society, adds: “Coastwatch provides an invaluable service for both local people and visitors to the area, and we’re very pleased to be able to support such a worthwhile initiative.”

Newcastle Building Society and its members support many charities and worthwhile causes across the region every year, through the Newcastle Building Society Fund administered by the Community Foundation serving Tyne & Wear and Northumberland.

Projects need to be based within an area where the Newcastle has a branch presence, and grant application forms can be downloaded from the Newcastle Building Society’s website ([www.newcastle.co.uk](http://www.newcastle.co.uk)). For further general information, please call Su Legg at the Community Foundation on 0191 222 0945.

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