

## **County Durham Foundation gives local ‘charity queen’ top job**

On 1<sup>st</sup> December County Durham Foundation will welcome its new Chief Executive Barbara Gubbins, who leaves The Children’s Foundation in Newcastle after five very successful years at the helm.

Barbara has been described in the past as a North East ‘charity queen’ for her impressive work with The Children’s Foundation and before that the Community Foundation serving Tyne and Wear and Northumberland. She even had a hand in the creation of the Coalfields Regeneration programme through her marketing work with English Partnerships, and was recently listed as one of the top 500 most influential people in the North East.

“The last ten years working in the voluntary sector have been the most rewarding of my career. My experience gained in marketing, PR, events and the magistracy, has allowed me to develop my skills in fundraising and understanding social issues which are vital to this role.”

County Durham Foundation is one of the area’s largest funders, currently managing philanthropic funds for over 90 companies and individuals, which saw it give out £1.9 million in grants last year to fight the effects of disadvantage in County Durham and Darlington.

During her time as Chief Executive of The Children’s Foundation, a North East charity which aims to improve child health across the region, Barbara raised over £2 million to improve the health of North East children and transformed the charity into a household name.

However Barbara’s first opportunity to make a big impression came whilst she was working for another local community foundation. As Development Director at the Community Foundation in Tyne and Wear, Barbara set up a Women’s Fund on behalf of Dame Margaret Barbour and established the Sammy Johnson Memorial Fund for actors Tim Healy and Jimmy Nail and she is very positive about working with a community foundation once again. Barbara says:

“I believe very strongly in the importance of Community Foundations. Now perhaps more than ever there is a real need for people’s money to be used effectively and to the greatest impact within the local community.

“I am very excited about my new role at County Durham Foundation and getting to know the county more, especially in light of the recent unitary changes. I know times are difficult because of the economic downturn right now, but think the voluntary sector needs more help than ever, so it’s important that we all pull together to support them.”

County Durham Foundation can be contacted on 0191 383 0055 or have a look at the website for more information: [www.countydurhamfoundation.co.uk](http://www.countydurhamfoundation.co.uk)

\_\_\_\_\_ Ends \_\_\_\_\_