**2016 Peter Scott Award – Paul Rowe**

Our second Peter Scott Award for Outstanding Contribution to Charity shines a light on Paul Rowe and his 12 years plus of managing The Phoenix Youth Project. We wanted to recognise both his fundraising achievements and his dedication to providing community based self-development opportunities for young people living in some of the most disadvantaged parts of Copeland.

Paul has been instrumental in raising over one and a half million pounds to ensure The Phoenix Youth Project gives young people a safe and friendly environment in which to socialise as well as a place to be meaningfully occupied. Of particular importance to us all is that this vital youth work supports the development of young people to achieve their physical, intellectual, social and personal potential.

Paul joined The Phoenix Youth Project in 2005, shortly after it was set up in 2003 in response to the disbandment of the County Council Youth service a few years earlier. The Phoenix Youth Project works with young people aged 8-19 years old in youth centres at Cleator Moor, Frizington and Moor Row - delivering 12 evening sessions a week - as well as providing outreach youth work. Paul oversees the area’s only team to provide a youth service. Each year they come into contact with over 500 different young people, seeing about 150 on a regular week to week basis. Because the Project puts young people at the heart of the planning, delivery and evaluation of activities, it means it is responsive and effective. Through tasks, trips and other opportunities for learning and development the young people are supported and challenged to grow personally and socially.

Paul has also played a key role developing The Phoenix Youth Project into a sustainable youth provision model. He has engaged local young people, parents and the community as a whole to become more actively involved in the future development of the project and we will continue to be interested in this amazing project. Paul has a strong belief in what effective youthwork looks like and has used this to drive and manage the project.

Originally from the North East and with thoughts of becoming a teacher, Paul’s first degree was a BA (hons) in History. Moving to the West Coast of Cumbria in 2003, a youth work volunteering opportunity with The Whitehaven Harbour Youth Project soon convinced Paul that this was the career for him. He soon gained his first paid youth worker role with Young Cumbria in Egremont later that year. During this post he returned to part-time University study and gained a post graduate diploma in youth and community work which he completed as he took up his post at the Phoenix Youth Project.

Paul is also a volunteer panel member, one of 12, on the Cumbria Community Foundation’s West Cumbria Grants Panel. He brings knowledge and experience of working with young people in the area to help with decision-making on the allocation of Foundation funds.

Paul was surprised and humbled to be given the Peter Scott Award. He says the success of The Phoenix Youth Project, is about ‘we’ not ‘I’. He is also quick to praise the volunteers who are the heart and soul of the Project and who give up their time freely to do something which it is his job to do.

True to the ethos of the charity Paul works for, he asked the young people at The Phoenix Youth Project what he should do with his £2,500 award grant. The answer was game tables – including football, pool and table tennis for each centre.