

FCSCCT

FRANCIS C SCOTT CHARITABLE TRUST

V2 Alan Docker is our fifth and the 2020 recipient of the Peter Scott Award for Outstanding Contribution to Charity for his Walney Community Trust work.

Born and educated in Barrow, Alan has always wanted to help others. He started early, as a 16-year-old pupil at Barrow Grammar School, by getting involved with his church's youth groups. His commitment to Walney and, in particular, to the young people of Walney continued right through married life and raising his own family, with his home often providing a venue for youth groups.

Even as a 19-year-old Alan had the ability to see need in his community and to act to make life better for those around him. He recalls driving down Abby Road seeing his peers on the street with nothing to do and nowhere to go. It's something that drives him on now, as a 74-year-old, and the reason why he is deserving of an award that recognises truly excellent people who make a real difference, often unsung and working in difficult conditions, challenging themselves and others.

Throughout his working life in the family fruit and veg business, Alan maintained his voluntary roles, running youth clubs and as a pastor at Spring Mount Church. When he was 50 he had two heart attacks and finished work to become a student at St Martin's College, Lancaster studying Christian ministry and youth work.

With his newly acquired qualification, and his youth work experience, Alan went on to set up and register the Walney Community Trust (WCT) as a charity in 2003.

Under Alan's leadership it has become a thriving hub of activity offering support and help to many people of all ages. The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) 2019, the official measure of relative deprivation for small areas, states that over a third of the North Walney population lives in the top 20% of the most deprived parts of the country, with half of Walney South in the top 30%.

Alan believes life has become more complicated for many people and that much younger children are needing help. He says there is a need for greater provision, and beyond the youth groups he ran as a younger man. Alan can see people struggling because of their circumstances which can include anything from poverty and debt to drugs and addiction.

Today the Walney Community Trust supports children and families, young people and adults, including those struggling with poverty, addictions, loneliness, physical or mental health difficulties, in or leaving care, the unemployed, ex-offenders and those with a lack of life skills and education. Support is provided in a number of ways including:

- toddler groups which attract around 300 parents and children
- regular, free community meals for approximately 90 people
- redistributing food from four local shops five days a week to families in need
- providing youth clubs, life skills courses, parenting courses, dependency courses, mental health workshops and other support groups including one for dads and holiday clubs for over 150 children and young people, with older teenagers taking on volunteering duties

Despite the large numbers of people seen at the centre, Alan and his team remain adept at identifying and working discreetly on a more individual level to address specific concerns and support people to make positive steps. For example, Alan has put forward young people for leadership

opportunities, through the Aspiring Leaders Programme, and provides ongoing support and encouragement. He is particularly good at spotting unmet potential in the people he meets and his aspirations for them inspire them to achieve more for themselves and their community.

Today Alan says there is still much to keep him busy. He is still involved in the Walney Community Trust, and his church which continues to grow. Alan and his wife also see a lot of their nine grandchildren who are an important part of their lives.

The Peter Scott Award for Outstanding Contribution to Charity comes with a grant of £2,500. Alan says it will benefit the three charities he is involved with, the Blessed Hill orphanage and school in Uganda, People2People in Romania - who work with the Roma people – and, of course, Walney Community Trust.

Alan is a man who has shown unwavering belief in his community and people. For nearly 60 years he has taken action to respond to the need he sees around him, pulling people in, developing strategies and finding resources.

He sums up his commitment to Walney Community Trust and Walney as: “a labour of love and devotion for those who are struggling with life coupled with my desire to help in whatever way I can and use whatever resources I can lay my hands on.”

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