



# Corporate Responsibility Review 2016/2017



Welcome





**Through our community work we are privileged to meet many inspirational people who are devoting much of their time and energy to helping others.**

As a highly successful regional firm, we believe that we also have a duty and responsibility to help others as much as we can.

The partners here at Muckle LLP are therefore proud of both the extent of our work and the number of people in the firm who are involved in that work and I hope this review provides a useful summary.

Donating 1% of our annual profits to our charitable fund continues to be a key focus for us. And, as a result of our new partnership with SkillsBridge, we have been able to increase considerably our volunteering activities, which is one of the themes in this review.

Anyway, please read on and if there is any aspect of our work that you would like to discuss, then do get in touch.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Hugh Welch'.

**Hugh Welch**  
**Senior Partner**  
**Muckle LLP**

# Donation sensation

Each year we donate 1% of our annual profits to our charitable fund.

And that soon adds up. In fact we've donated over £500,000 to local causes since we started the fund in 2002. From football clubs to scout groups and healthy living programmes to mainstream regional charities. Giving back to community projects of all shapes and sizes has always been hugely important to us. And 2016 was no exception.



**40**  
North East charities  
benefitted

**2016**

**£32,299**  
given to local  
causes



## Muckle LLP charitable fund

**1%**

of our annual profits donated  
**each year**

**£500,000**

awarded to local  
charities since our  
fund started

**Hundreds**

of organisations  
have benefitted

# Helping communities grow

Organisations apply for funding through the Community Foundation, a charity that inspires and supports charitable giving in Tyne & Wear and Northumberland.

The foundation manages our charitable fund. It grows as a direct result of the hard work of our people here at Muckle, which is why our employees have a say in which charities benefit through the foundation. In fact many grants made through the foundation go to causes directly recommended by our people.

**“The opportunity the fund provides to these vital organisations, and their beneficiaries, is truly staggering.”**

Jon Goodwin, Community Foundation senior philanthropy advisor

“Marra camp is attended by around 2,500 young people from across the region. We’re very grateful to Muckle LLP for helping us to take part.”

**“The experience will help our young people not only to develop independence and team work skills, but take part in a wide range of fun activities and make new friends.”**

Tony Stephenson, group scout leader at the 49th Newcastle Scouts



YOUTH DEVELOPMENT £2,000



## Expedition equipment £500

"Thank you so much for granting us £500 to start off our Duke of Edinburgh award group at girls brigade. **It meant that we could buy the equipment required for the expedition section.**

We bought a tent, maps, compasses, map cases and four cooking stoves."  
Lynzie Ridley, girls brigade officer for 8th Newcastle



"The chair of our charity, Esther Ward, came into the office with a brand new walking stick that had a light on the front as well as an alarm for emergencies. She was very pleased, as it means that **walking down steps in the dark or finding the keyhole in her front door is now much easier.**"

Craig Bankhead, Gateshead Older People's assembly development manager



## Safe-tech walking sticks £360

# Time to give



Many of our people volunteer their time and skills to help all kinds of charities in all kinds of ways.

Recently we started working with SkillsBridge, a charity that links businesses to community initiatives, to help channel our volunteering and make an even bigger difference. SkillsBridge ran a series of focus groups with our employees, who decided to focus our positive volunteering energy on helping the community in the West End of Newcastle, just up the road from our office.

## Why the West End?

Poor health, high unemployment, child poverty and debt feature high among many issues within the community. Through SkillsBridge we are connected with projects that help people in the West End tackle these difficulties.

## How are we helping?

The focus groups gave us a structure to make the most of our volunteering, with five key themes.



### Employment

One-to-one job searching advice, CV writing tips, interview techniques and workshops on what employers are looking for.



### Young people

Supporting trips, outdoor activities, working one-to-one with young people with general mentoring and employment advice.



### Social inclusion

Support with conversational English, career development and mentoring.



### Environment

Cleaning up the local area, transforming green spaces, installing planters or growing vegetables.



### Social enterprise

Professional support with legal structure, contracts, business planning and mentoring start-ups.

Claire Atkins, our Director of HR, volunteers on the board at JET. The West End based charity helps people from black and minority ethnic backgrounds, refugees and any new migrant communities find work, improve their skills and integrate into the region.

Claire and her team have been supporting JET with HR advice and are helping them streamline their admin processes.

“Since being introduced to Claire by SkillsBridge **the support has been quite unbelievable and had a positive effect on the charity, our staff and our clients.** We have seen HR processes improved and staff training provided. I cannot thank Claire and the team enough”.

Julie Fernyhough, JET CEO





“Working with Muckle is an absolute pleasure. **Corporate responsibility runs through the firm like a stick of rock.**”

Andrew White, SkillsBridge chief executive

### Success4All

Success4All provides free to low-cost support for young people in areas of low academic achievement across Newcastle. Through their learning hubs, students get access to the internet, a volunteer tutor or mentor, learning resources, clubs and summer schools. The charity aims to boost learning, academic ability and confidence in young people in these areas, and plays a vital role in fighting social, economic and digital exclusion.

So far we've funded five Lenovo IdeaPads, complete with Microsoft Office tools, and a number of our employees regularly volunteer at the West End hubs.

“Working with Muckle has been great. The volunteer tutors' academic skills, lessons of perseverance and advice on the wider world of work has a **really positive impact on those young minds.**” Caroline Afolabi-Deleu, Success4All managing director

“I often help with Maths and English, however every session is completely different. I enjoy volunteering and it's plain to see that **young people enjoy learning in this fun and friendly environment.**”

Sam Roberts, trainee solicitor



# Free legal services

In 2016 we provided over £70,000 of legal support to smaller charities in our community.

Gifting our expertise is one of the best ways we can make a difference. Society benefits, the reputation of the legal profession is strengthened, our people value it and our firm is stronger as a result. It's why we were one of the first firms in the UK to sign up to the newly formed Law Society's Pro Bono Charter.

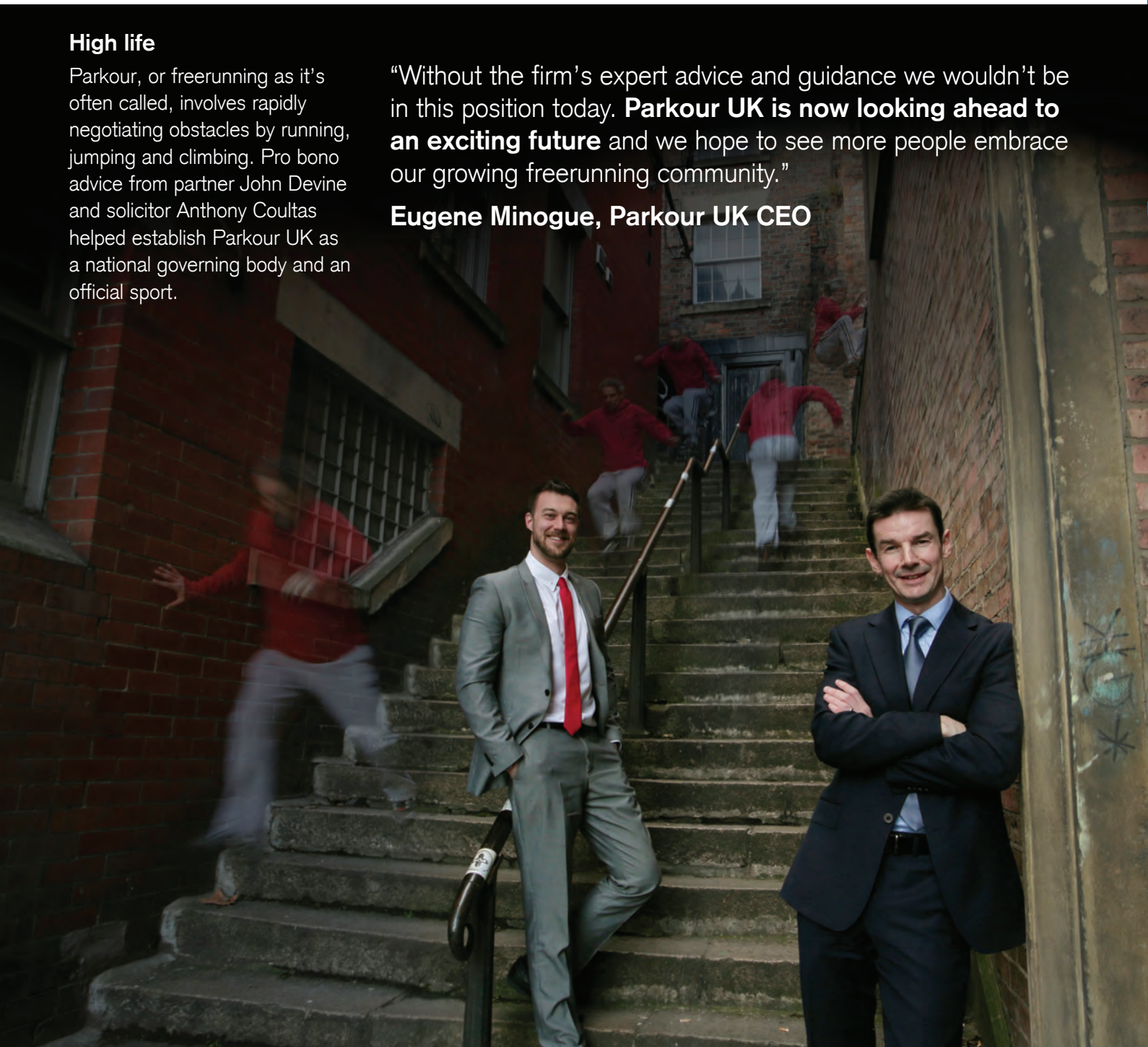
Many of our lawyers are also board members of committees and charities and invest much of their personal time in supporting worthy projects. There are too many examples to mention here, so we've picked out a few highlights.

## High life

Parkour, or freerunning as it's often called, involves rapidly negotiating obstacles by running, jumping and climbing. Pro bono advice from partner John Devine and solicitor Anthony Coultas helped establish Parkour UK as a national governing body and an official sport.

"Without the firm's expert advice and guidance we wouldn't be in this position today. **Parkour UK is now looking ahead to an exciting future** and we hope to see more people embrace our growing freerunning community."

**Eugene Minogue, Parkour UK CEO**



## Ship shape advice

“Jason’s support with what became a protracted period of negotiation was **tremendously helpful, and has allowed our charity to double its capacity** in building and restoring wooden boats. We now have a unique and important asset with the last remaining wooden boatyard of its type on the coast anywhere between Berwick and Whitby.”

**Jerry Dudman, secretary of NEMT**



### Caring for others

Eden Valley Hospice provides specialist care for adults and children with life-limiting conditions in North Cumbria and South West Scotland. They took employment partner Chris Maddock up on his offer of a day’s free legal support.

Chris spent the day updating their employment contracts and procedures and training management on employment law. While he was there Chris was also able to present the Jigsaw, Cumbria’s Children’s Hospice with a donation of £1,000 from our charitable fund to pay for a state of the art bed.

“I met some absolutely amazing people. It is one of the best days that I’ve had in 20 years as an employment solicitor.” Chris Maddock, partner.

Jason Wainwright, our managing partner, helped the North East Maritime Trust secure a lease on a historic boatyard. It wasn’t plain sailing, but our advice helped save the boatyard from ruin and means

the charity can preserve many more traditional boats. We also donated £1,000 to help repair their original workshop roof. Now the trust is busy raising funds to complete the boatyard restoration.





### Social conscience

Talk to any of our lawyers and they'll talk to you about the sector they specialise in, not the law. We're just like any other quality service company, genuinely passionate about the kind of things our clients care about.

Like Charlotte McMurchie, partner in our real estate team. In work Charlotte is devoted to social housing. Outside work and family she devotes much of her time to... well, social housing.

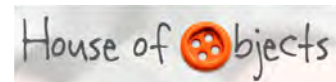
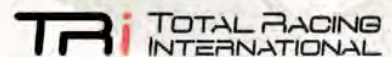
Charlotte, is a board member at Tyne Housing Association, which provides supported housing for homeless, vulnerable and disadvantaged adults and children. The organisation also runs a number of charitable subsidiaries offering healthcare and training to help the people they support become independent.

Ouseburn farm is one such subsidiary, and it was struggling to stay open. We donated £1,000 to help bridge their funding gap and save the popular visitor attraction.

“As a board member, **Charlotte's input on housing and business matters is invaluable** and her help in securing a grant from Muckle was very timely. The funds will go a long way towards sustaining the farm, which is a vital source of engagement, education and training for so many of the vulnerable people we support.”

Ian Johnson, Tyne Housing Association chief executive

# Who else are we helping with pro bono advice?



# Bright sparks

Did you know the average student leaves university around £44,000 in debt? That means a career in law is becoming less and less of an option for many people, no matter how much they have to offer.

It shouldn't matter where you come from - you should still be able to become a lawyer if you have the ability, drive and interest to do so. And we run a number of initiatives to help.



## Student feedback:

"I thoroughly enjoyed my week and everyone was lovely and friendly. **Muckle is a very good law firm and really interested me in commercial law.** Thank you for a great week."

"I am very grateful to have had the opportunity to take part. **Thank you to everyone who took time out of their busy day to make it possible.**"

## Inspiring Careers

To land a job as a solicitor you need relevant work experience, as well as excellent grades. And gaining that crucial experience often boils down to who you know, not what you know.

That's why we engaged with eight North East schools and established our annual Inspiring Careers programme for 6th form students. The scheme gives students a taste of life in a law firm and, hopefully, shows how it is accessible to everyone, not just the best connected.

We've been running Inspiring Careers since 2012. Schools and students keep coming back and most young people we've managed to keep in touch with have gone on to study law. Some have recently applied to our graduate recruitment and apprenticeship schemes too.

"The opportunities our students have had to work with Muckle through their Inspiring Careers programme have been truly exceptional. **It is far more than a week in an office - it is a genuinely challenging and thought-provoking learning experience.**"

Sammy Wright, Assistant Principal Southmoor Academy.



### Solicitor apprenticeships

"Fair and open access to the legal profession is something I have always felt passionately about. I grew up in an environment where post-16 education wasn't valued or encouraged. With the current system of loans and debt I am 100% sure I would not have gone to university." Jason Wainwright, managing partner.

Up until recently, the only way school leavers could become a lawyer was to go to university. And that doesn't suit everyone. For some, it's simply not possible. That's why we have been so passionate about setting up the region's first solicitor apprenticeship scheme.

We partnered with CILEx Law School, City University of London and four other local law firms to deliver an apprenticeship that means young people can earn while they learn to become a lawyer. No crippling university fees. No spiralling debts.

Like most things new it wasn't easy to get started, but after three years' hard work we were delighted to launch in 2017 with an open day attended by over 50 enthusiastic local students plus parents. In the end over 80 candidates applied for seven places across the five North East firms. Our first two solicitor apprentices will start in September 2017.



# Picture perfect

We're a people business, so hiring and developing the right kind of employees couldn't be more important. Especially the 'development' bit. It's what has helped us retain lots of talented people and some have been here over 30 years. So we must be doing something right.

There are many types of employees here too. Not just solicitors. Here's how lots of different careers can get started at Muckle.

## John Cran

### Business Lounge assistant

John joined us through Momentum Skills and impressed so much we offered him a permanent role, looking after our reception, meeting rooms and storerooms. Now we can't imagine the place without him.

## Kate Newman

### solicitor

After experiencing several different practice areas as a trainee, wowing clients and colleagues along the way, Kate took a permanent position in our real estate team this year.





## Momentum Skills

Investing in People, Changing Perspectives

### **Katie Barrett and Rhiannon Singleton operations assistant apprentices**

Greeting clients, taking calls, and handling a host of important admin jobs – Katie and Rhiannon are two of seven apprentices. They have been working towards their NVQ in Business Administration since joining in 2016.

### **Jack Birks business development executive**

Jack progressed from an apprentice operations assistant in 2010 to become the executive behind many of our events, eNewsletters and social media campaigns.

We started working with Momentum Skills in 2008, providing vocational rehabilitation and training for people with disabilities. Clients spend up to 12 weeks on a work placement with us to boost confidence in their employability and experience life at a busy law firm.

In 2016 Roz Thorpe joined us after suffering a stroke five years earlier. It left her in a wheelchair with only the use of one arm, but through Momentum she's gaining confidence and getting back into work.

#### **How did you find out about Momentum Skills?**

Roz: The Stroke Association put me in touch with Momentum Skills. It is a fabulous organisation which helps people through confidence building, work placements and hopefully eventual paid work.

#### **What were you hoping for in a placement with Muckle?**

I needed experience in updated admin work, which I got. It was for a three month period working up to 15 hours a week. Scanning documents, updating and naming documents and various other tasks including reception work.

#### **How did it go?**

It is such an amazing place to work. The atmosphere there was brilliant. The people are lovely. Nothing was a bother to them and I was given anything I needed to do the job.

#### **How has your experience helped?**

I can honestly say I enjoyed every minute. Working at Muckle has helped me so much with my confidence and helped me with additions to my CV. I would just like to thank everyone once again. You should be very proud of your company.

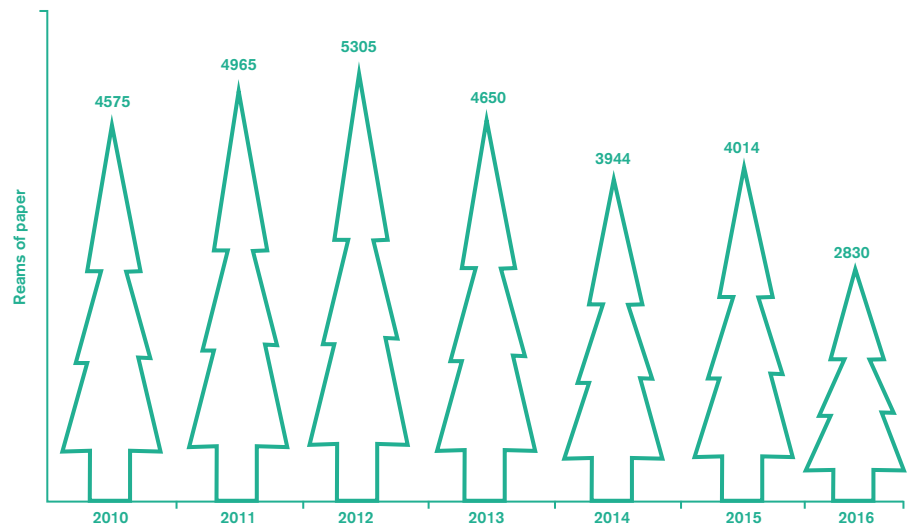
# Let's think green

We're a responsible bunch and try our best to think green at work. In fact, it's been ten years since we set up our Let's Think Green Team to do just that.

Now the firm recycles everything possible, including waste paper, electrical items, printer toners and mobile phones. We even grow our own veg... with varying degrees of success.

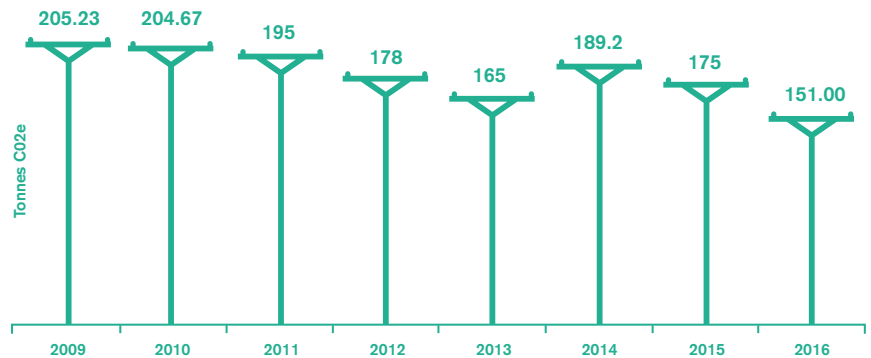
Paper  
plummeted **47%**

We've banned routine archiving of almost all paper files - which are now scanned - part of a long term strategy to do more things digitally. Paper purchases have almost halved since 2013.



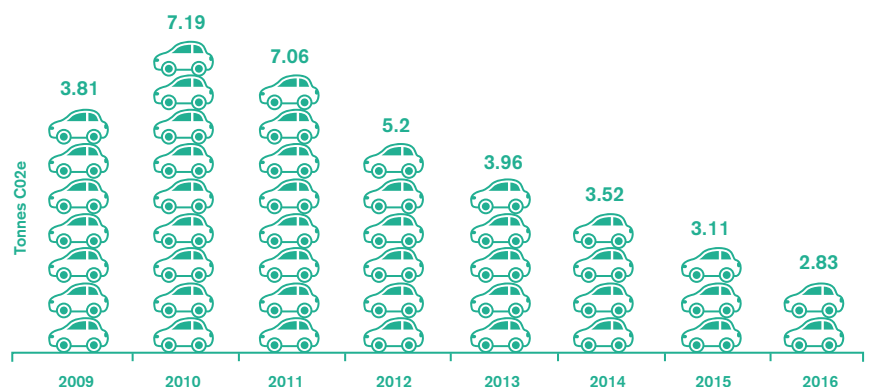
**11%** greener  
than 2015

Doing more things digitally can make it even harder to cut energy consumption and reduce our carbon footprint, but our busy office has managed it again and again.



Pool car  
CO2e  
down **45%**

In 2016 we renewed one of our pool cars with an energy efficient Ford Fiesta TDCi Zetec Econetic, adding to our Nissan Leaf electric pool car, bought in 2013. Since then we've cut emissions by nearly half and saved over £700 in fuel costs.



## Leg work

We encourage sustainable travel and our cycle to work scheme has grown so popular we installed an additional 15 cycle bike rack and drying cabinet for drying out wet kit at our premises.



Trains, planes  
& automobiles  
down **24%**

State of the art conference and video calling facilities, green pool cars and remote working with RSA key fobs and mobile devices. It all helped reduce our total business travel emissions by almost a quarter in 2016 alone.



**41** tonnes  
of paper  
recycled

Centralised paper bins are used to recycle all our waste paper and cardboard, which equated to over 41 tonnes in 2016.



**£492** raised in Harvest  
Festival auction

Donated to Scotswood Community Garden, a charity we're working with through SkillsBridge. The money is helping to fund a horticultural qualification for one of their volunteers.



**65** old  
phones  
recycled  
in 2016

Each year we send off our unwanted old phones for recycling.

# Miles of fun

Back in 2009 we decided to join in National Walk to Work Week. The challenge was to cover as many miles collectively as we could. Walking to work, walking lunch breaks, walking meetings - you name it. 37 people took part then and covered a very respectable 535 miles. We kept up the tradition each year and in 2012 we decided to create our own campaign - Healthy Living Week. And of course, we shifted things up a gear.



## What is Healthy Living Week?

The aim is still the same, cover as many miles as we can, with a host of healthy extras thrown in, including:

- Free healthy breakfasts of fresh fruit and cereals for employees each morning
- Sports matches including netball, rounders and football
- Free office exercise classes like Zumba, yoga and metafit
- Running, cycling and walking contests
- A slap-up buffet lunch when it's all over



## Passage to Pakistan

We also decided to use Healthy Living Week to go on a virtual trip around the world.

Wherever we end up forms the basis for our celebratory buffet and last year we made it to Pakistan, covering an astonishing 3,315 miles in just one week. A few steps more than 2009, and the curry-based buffet afterwards made it all worthwhile.



# Healthy Living Week 2016

**62**

people took part

**173.5**

miles cycled by Steve Cunningham, winner of our cycling challenge

**57.91**

miles walked by Jane Guiney, winner of our walking challenge

**£350**

raised for charity in our sponsored ramble

**55**

miles ran by Hugh Welch, winner of our running challenge

**316,992** calories burned

**3315.4** miles covered





# Wheelie good fundraising

The challenge was simple. The Percy Hedley Foundation gave us £500 and we had to grow it as much as we could in six months. You could invest in fun runs, bake offs or put the money in a high interest bank account. But we like to do things differently.

From hosting a Muckle ebay-style auction to setting up a tuck shop, we came up with loads of fresh fundraising ideas. The foundation provides specialist care for disabled people and their families, so our trainees devised a sponsored wheelchair basketball match against the highly successful Percy Hedley Eagles. We lost the match, but raised a fortune. Just under £4,000 overall to be precise. And we netted the Most Innovative Fundraising Idea award in the process.

"It was a great way for Muckle to engage with us, learn a lot about wheelchair sports and raise some funds at the same time. It was really entertaining to watch and we were really impressed by how quickly they got the hang of it. There were lots of laughs and smiles all round and they were very good sports." Sheila Coltman, corporate partnerships manager at Percy Hedley.

"Even though we got thrashed, the Percy Hedley team were so friendly and it's **amazing how much we learned** in terms of how to handle the chairs, though I think there's a lot of room for improvement!"  
**Charlotte Littlefair, trainee solicitor**



# England's oldest road race



Our big passion for sport made us a fitting lead sponsor for the historic Morpeth to Newcastle road race. We contributed £10,000 to help get the oldest

race in England back up and running after a ten year break due to lack of funds.

Participants in the marathon and cycle sportive from Morpeth, the half marathon from Whitley Bay and the city centre mini-mile converged at the finish line on Newcastle's quayside. It meant people of all ages and abilities could enjoy the event. In fact over 2,000 people took part, including lots of our runners and cyclists. Some even volunteered to help out race organisers on the day.

We enjoyed the event so much, we've teamed up with Olympic Gold Medal winner Jonathan Edwards to help Total Racing International organise the 2017 event.

"The race is **steeped in tradition and is historically recognised throughout the UK**. It speaks volumes for the North East that we continue to celebrate our heritage and values by staging such worthwhile events."

**Hugh Welch, senior partner**



£10,000 SPONSORSHIP

# Supporting the region

## Faith in North East business

Through the work of one of our partners as a trustee, we have enjoyed a long relationship with Shepherds Dene, a wonderful Edwardian country house and retreat for the Newcastle and Durham Anglican Dioceses. For many years we've hosted an annual dinner series, bringing together representatives from many of the region's leading businesses, and one of the guests talks about their faith, work and ethics.

Our first guest speaker was Justin Welby, shortly before his appointment as Archbishop of Canterbury. Justin gave an inspirational talk about his transition from being a top executive within the oil industry to his time as a Bishop in the Church of England. We then heard at the end of 2016 from Sir Brian Souter, the founder of Stagecoach Group, who gave a stirring talk about his life, faith and business ethics. Many people may say that this has little to do with helping communities, but we believe that anything which promotes sharing successful business concepts with others is worth doing.

## Guiding North East potential

Steve McNicol, client and strategic development partner, volunteers on the University of Newcastle's CAPTURED programme - a scheme that links experienced executives with ambitious entrepreneurs. He was paired up with Ian Straker, co-founder of Transmit Start-Ups, a business that helps new companies access finance. Steve and Ian meet up regularly and look at ways to help Ian's business grow. And it's been growing nicely.

Since the mentoring began in March 2016, Transmit have launched new services, increased revenue and nearly doubled their employees.

"Having Steve on hand to provide a sounding board, guidance and constructive feedback as the business continues to develop is definitely helpful and something which I value greatly."

**Ian Straker, Transmit Start-Ups director**





## Pride in North East heritage

“Magnetic North East is about everything, really – music, culture, art, heritage, all the things that make the North East a great place to live. So it was about trying to pull something together that could have an overview of it all and make all those connections.”

**Kathryn Tickell OBE**



We were proud to support the launch of Magnetic North East at Sage Gateshead in November 2016. The community interest company was set up to celebrate the region's music, arts and heritage by world famous Northumbrian smallpipes player Kathryn Tickell, together with Andrew Davison, Muckle partner and keen piper.

An evening bursting with variety brought top recording artists together, who all share a connection with North East culture. Kathryn Tickell led the evening, which included music from Paul Smith of Maximo Park, drama from Charlie Hardwick of Emmerdale and a range of traditionally inspired performances from the Baghdaddies, youth folk band Superfolkus and many others.

“Countries such as Scotland, Ireland and Wales are defined by their heritage and we want pride in our region's traditions to be just as celebrated.” Andrew Davison, partner and chairman of the Northumbrian Pipers' Society.





# Just a few more things...

Being a responsible business isn't about winning awards. But it is nice. And 2016 proved to be a pretty sensational year.



### Solicitors Journal Regional Firm of the Year

Judges highlighted our community work as a stand-out factor amidst stiff competition from other firms across the UK.



### Investors in People Gold status

We were reassessed in 2016 and secured Gold status for another three years, having been awarded the same status in 2013.



### Investors in People Health and Wellness award

We wowed the judges with our extensive range of benefits including Healthy Living Week, offering personal health checks, providing maternity and work-life balance coaches and flexible working options.



### CIPD North East 2016 - Health and Wellness Innovation Winner

Our innovation in improving our employees' physical and mental health and wellness sealed the win.



Certificate No. EMS 558231

### ISO14001:2015

In 2016 we pitted our working practices against the revised international environmental standard, and passed the test. We've held the previous ISO standard since 2010, and qualifying under this new improved benchmark continues our status as one of the few firms in the region with this accreditation.



### Community at heart

While 2016 was great, 2017 also got off to an award winning start. We were delighted to win the Heart of the Community Award for the Tyneside and Northumberland region at the North East Business Awards for the fourth time! Our bid was based on a broad range of work which included:

**£500,000 in donations** to local causes since our charitable fund began

**£70,000 pro bono** legal services helping North East organisations in 2016 alone

**2 days** paid volunteering leave a year available to all employees



The Gazette The Journal  
North East  
**business awards 2017**  
With North East England Chamber of Commerce

**1 inspiring careers programme** - giving young people law firm experience

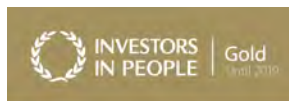
**10 years** of carbon cutting - thanks to our Let's Think Green Team's leadership



Our business has enjoyed the support of the region for many decades, so it is absolutely right that we do all we can to give back to the community in which we work and live.

Thank you for taking time to read our review. We hope you enjoyed it.

# muckle<sup>LLP</sup>



## Muckle LLP

 @MuckleLLP

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