

From phone box to lifesaver



By Tracy Walker

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A RURAL red phone box near Cockermouth is set to become a lifesaver after marking a major milestone in British Telecom's Adopt a Kiosk programme.

The 3,000th box to be adopted in the UK - in Loweswater - has been fitted with defibrillator equipment, which can help save the lives of heart attack victims.

The equipment has been paid for by BT and installed by the Community Heartbeat Trust, a charity that makes possible the provision of defibrillators for local communities.

It was officially launched on Tuesday.

The defibrillator is secured in the phone box in a high visibility yellow, vandal-resistant, heated steel cabinet. It can be opened with a combination code available from the emergency services by calling 999. As there is no mobile phone signal at the kiosk, BT has also sponsored a landline for emergency calls. The defibrillator machine provides spoken step-by-step instructions for users.

The phone box was bought by Community Heartbeat Trust for £1 as part of BT's Adopt a Kiosk scheme because



LOWESWATER DEFIBRILLATOR: First responder Roger Hiley, far right, and the phone box housing a defibrillator

it was no longer needed as a working payphone.

As well as being repainted to bring the red icon back to life, a local resident and First Responder has designed and installed a new tile floor in the box. Roger Hiley drew his inspiration from the surrounding landscape.

Mr Hiley said: "The mural stone draws on the green of the Lakeland fells, the creamy whites of the Swaledale ewes and the ruddled

red of the classic Herdwick design ties in with the Red Cross emblem to link to the neutrality and service commitment of those who give their time and efforts in the cause of the common good."

Mr Hiley, who is a member of the Vale of Lorton Community First Responders and will look after the box, said: "It's a brilliant landmark, midway between the pub, village hall and car park."

Martin Fagan, national secretary for the Community Heartbeat Trust charity, which undertook the project, said: "The use of redundant phone boxes is both a lifesaver for the community and these iconic structures."

BT's Adopt a Kiosk scheme has captured the imagination of people up and down the country since it was introduced in 2008.

Mark Johnson, programme manager at BT Payphones,

said: "We couldn't let this 3,000th adoption pass without recognising such an achievement and it's gratifying to see this village phone box being given a new lease of life and being put to such good use."

Up to 100,000 people a year in the UK suffer from an 'out of hospital' sudden cardiac arrest making it one of the UK's largest killers. The availability of a defibrillator machine greatly increases the chances of surviving an attack.

Picture: JOHN STORY