

## **Community Grants System 2014/15**

### **Background**

Throughout the course of the 2013/14 year we successfully awarded almost £80,000 to local groups for the benefit of Frome communities. Along the way, we have also learnt a number of important lessons, both by working more closely with these groups and through other activities such as Participate Frome week. Of course there is still plenty more that we need to understand, but the start of the new grants cycle is a great opportunity to review the system and to try out new approaches which we hope will deliver even more benefits to groups in Frome.

### **Priorities for the Community Grants system in 2014/15:**

- Same budget, £80,000 to be used to benefit Frome communities over the year
- The system to be transparent so people understand how it works and we will explore ways of making the decision making process more participatory
- The application procedure to be as simple and easy to use as possible and the feedback system developed to make it more useful
- Explore working in more depth with some groups to work on annual grants instead of smaller project based grants to avoid continued repeat applications throughout the year when the money could much more usefully be used in a more strategic way
- Explore ways in which FTC can more actively support groups in Frome to develop project proposals and grant applications on a larger scale - bringing more grant funds into the town and delivering more ambitious projects
- Much greater promotion of our grants both internally and externally to recognise and celebrate the impact they have across the town
- The People's Grant to be replaced this year by working on making the project grant system more participatory and by working more closely with groups in Frome to develop larger project ideas – increasing community capacity

### **Community Grants system 2014/15**

We have worked on changing the system to deliver these priorities, which means that not all the grants budget will be delivered to community groups directly through grants. The grants system will therefore take the following format:

#### **Grants available for application (£65,000)**

1. Project Grants - £30,000 total budget
  - System very similar to 2013/14 system with small (up to £300) and large (up to £3,000) grants for projects
  - System run in three rounds over the year
  - Each group can apply once a year for a project grant
  - System development to make the decision making more participatory with public input
2. Partnership grants - £35,000 total budget
  - Annual grant for established groups that know their strategy for the year ahead

- Does not need to be project focussed
- Maximum application £5,000
- Groups to demonstrate how their application (alongside other criteria) will deliver high impact and will deliver shared objectives
- More in-depth application and closer contact between groups and FTC

### **Indirect grant benefits for Frome communities**

3. Contract for Fundraising advisor - £10,000 total budget
  - In 2013/14 this £10,000 unlocked approximately £25,000 for local community groups
  - Greenstrand are the current contract holders – until October 2014
  - Contract includes a communication agreement, including regular stream of information and updates on the outcomes of this work through our website/Facebook site
4. Large project grant development with groups in Frome - £5,000 total
  - Objective: to have developed exciting community project grant applications ready for submission in early 2015 either to external sources or to sources within Frome. To increase the capacity of groups in Frome to access grant funding.
  - Delivered through a programme of workshops/events for community groups in Frome to develop projects and buying in external expertise where needed for, e.g:
    - Strategic planning/developing business plans
    - Ideas/Project development/ partnership working/writing applications
  - FTC to seek to work in partnership with other grant awarding bodies in town for delivery of this programme

### **Additional changes required**

- Changes to application process:
  - Simplify criteria and scoring matrix on forms
  - Simplify application forms to make them as easy as possible for groups to fill in and communicate their ideas
- Changes to feedback system:
  - Develop feedback forms that help to measure impact of project activities
  - Ensure that feedback is used in future grant awarding
- Promotional plans/communications:
  - Develop comprehensive comms/promotional strategy for the year to ensure that the grants system remains high profile both internally and externally (e.g. schedule in press releases, invite successful groups to feed back at council meetings etc)