



PRESS RELEASE

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Community celebrates friendship between people of different backgrounds

The Community Integration Grants funded projects that nurture mutual understanding, trust and friendship between people of different ethnicities, ages or socio-economic backgrounds. At an event on Tuesday, all the charities funded came together to celebrate their work, alongside the donors who enabled the grants.

Guests from 12 different charities came to the Tap Social community space on Tuesday 12th February 2019, where they were congratulated on their achievements by the High Sheriff of Oxfordshire Richard Venables. Oxfordshire Community Foundation provided funding in 2018 for all 12 charities to carry out projects ranging from creative workshops for people across generations remembering WW1, to football tournaments that engage isolated communities, to people from different cultural backgrounds sharing their cuisine.

Richard said: "It is my great pleasure to be here today to officially present the High Sheriff's Community Integration Grants. This is a unique award which seeks to bring together people from different backgrounds, build mutual understanding and encourage a sense of belonging to the wider community."

Banbury-based EMBS Community College opened the celebration by sharing the impact of a project from the grants programme that was funded in 2017. Their Threading Together initiative brought together small groups of women from different cultures or religions with an interest in making their own clothes, using the practical work to encourage new dialogue, teaching English language skills and money-saving techniques in the process.

The 12 groups funded in 2018 were then presented with official congratulatory letters, and guests heard from four of the groups about their plans for the funding: a nature conservation group for people with mental health difficulties in Sonning Common; an intergenerational project at the Red Kite Family Centre; a buddying scheme for people with learning difficulties to attend gigs from My Life My Choice; and an inter-cultural music festival coordinated by the Oxford Hindu Temple.

Marion Stevenson DL, chair of the Community Integration grants committee, closed by talking about the origins of the funding, which started as an initiative of former High Sheriff Graham Upton. Over the years many generous donors have committed funds to help ensure that community groups such as those showcased at the event can receive the support they need – and future years should be no exception. She said: "We believe that people work best together in groups; however, when times get tough, it can be more challenging to build peaceful communities. We cannot rest on our laurels in this divided world; and so this work of nurturing trust and dialogue will continue under the expert supervision of OCF, with the new working title 'Community Friendship Fund'."

Future grant-making decisions, rather than being led by High Sheriffs, will involve more community champions from different backgrounds, bringing in their experience of working at a grassroots level with local people. OCF hopes that these champions can help us embed long-term friendships, and empower people to enjoy shared interests together.

Canapés at the event were prepared by a new social enterprise at Rose Hill Junior Youth Club, and served by 10th North Oxford Guides.

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Notes for editors

About Oxfordshire Community Foundation

- Oxfordshire Community Foundation (OCF) is an independent charity that connects people who care with causes that matter. We inspire local philanthropy, and nurture community-based solutions to key social problems across Oxfordshire.
- We are one of 46 community foundations in the UK, and over 1,800 similar foundations around the world. Community foundations collaborate with private philanthropists, family trusts, businesses and the public sector to provide a permanent, flexible and growing source of local charitable funding. Community foundations across the UK have collectively made over £1 billion in charitable grants.

Full list of Community Integration Grants made in 2018

Organisation	Project funded	Amount
Abingdon DAMASCUS Youth Project	This project brings young and older people together to make poppies, and create writing, poetry and art work around the theme of remembrance, to be displayed at a Remembrance Service in November commemorating the end of WW1.	£2,225
African Families in the UK	The 'Shared Kitchen' is a cooking project that will promote integration and cross-cultural friendships by bringing together local British women aged over 50 and recently arrived migrant women, to learn from each other as they share traditional everyday British recipes and any other parenting and life skills nuggets.	£5,000
East Oxford United Football Club	East Oxford United runs football tournaments as a way of engaging isolated communities in joint initiatives to address commonly held social issues and problems. The Community Cohesion Cup brings together a wide range of communities to celebrate diversity, and encourage dialogue, practical action and unity.	£3,000
EMBS Community College	Through a common goal of learning how to make or alter clothes to save money, groups of diverse disadvantaged people in Banbury are encouraged to support each other, learn about different cultures, improve their confidence and set up an open day to display and celebrate their achievements.	£5,000
Flo's: the Place in the Park	Flo's is a community-owned and run initiative which provides a safe, welcoming, inclusive place for families and people of all generations and backgrounds to meet, eat, work, play and learn. The grant enables partnerships with Ark T, Community Midwives and the Oxford Asian Women's group to widen the offer of services.	£5,000
Maymessy Community Interest Company	This project aims to build skills and encourage the exchange of ideas through cookery classes at Maymessy, with women refugees from Refugee Resource. They will gain social integration, greater language skills, social networks, collaboration and wellbeing.	£1,200
NOMAD	This project in the Henley area will provide structured training opportunities to volunteers who have become isolated, for whatever reason, in the safe and friendly environment of the d:two Community Café. The cafe provides quality refreshments and service and welcomes customers from across the whole community.	£2,500
Oxford Hindu Temple Community Centre Project	The 'Making Music Together' project will work with four partners across different ethnic communities to harness linguistic, vocal, poetic and musical traditions. This will culminate in three events: Indian Republic Day, Holi and Basant, and Hangout for Eid. The project will also create a database of performers in all the art forms and a calendar of events.	£4,000
Oxfordshire My Life My Choice	The Gig Buddies project matches beneficiaries with a volunteer who loves the same kind of 'gigs' (eg football matches, the cinema, museum, concerts etc) so they can go to these gigs together. Gig Buddies will support people to come together and to be less socially isolated.	£5,000

Organisation	Project funded	Amount
Red Kite Family Centre	Growing Up Together is an intergenerational project in Thame where the youngest children learn together with the oldest residents. The project supports both generations to learn new skills with support from local artists. The project will also increase volunteers within both organisations to enable continued intergenerational community visits.	£2,100
Sonning Common Green Gym	The Green Gym draws volunteers from across the community, including taking referrals from the Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust. Volunteers undertake practical nature conservation activities to help the local environment and to improve their physical and mental health and fitness.	£500
The Oxford Foundation	The Oxford Foundation created the <i>One World Festival - Songs From Across the World</i> event in the Ashmolean Museum to enable the drawing together of Oxford's rich diversity of performers, from across the different cultures in our beautiful city and county, to celebrate through the powerful medium of songs.	£3,000

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