

Summerfield Charitable Trust & Gloucestershire VCS Alliance Partnership Project

Frequently Asked Questions (May 2024)

How did this project come about?

As the value of the Summerfield Charitable Trust's investments decline, the Trustees have spent the last year considering how they can make the biggest difference to charitable causes across Gloucestershire. Rather than continue to distribute diminishing sums to charitable causes in the county, the Trustees have taken the decision to invest the Trust's capital in innovative, game-changing projects that aim to make a lasting difference to individuals and communities in Gloucestershire. Gloucestershire VCS Alliance has been working with the the Trust for the last six months to support the Trust to develop an investment strategy.

What is the aim of the project?

This project aims to enable communities to make decisions about funding available to them. The funding will be focussed on six key themes:

1. **A connected society:** interventions that build and strengthen social networks.
2. **Children and families:** creating VCSE sector capacity to support families with children under the age of 5.
3. **Ageing well:** developing locality-based supports that enable older people to live a 'good life'.
4. **Arts and culture:** threading creativity, arts and culture throughout the other themes in a way that widens access and increases participation.
5. **Action for nature and climate:** investment in specific projects that enable communities to take action for nature or foster collective and individual behaviours that reduce the use of carbon.
6. **VCSE infrastructure:** developing the infrastructure – both buildings and organisational support – that will enable the sector to innovate and thrive.

What is the role of the Core Group?

The Core Group will design the approach to working with communities and will shape ideas into coherent investment proposals. It will be their responsibility to ensure that the six disparate themes work as a coherent project overall.

Will you be looking for community members to be part of the Core Group?

The target audience for the Core Group is the VCSE sector rather than citizens – we are looking for up to eight people who can really drive the project forward at a strategic level. However, we welcome expressions of interest from citizens. We may find that we do not have all of the skills, networks and communities that we need in the Core Group. If this happens, there may be opportunities for citizens to join the Core Group at the community engagement stage.

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If an organisation becomes a member of the Core Group would that preclude them from applying and benefitting from funding at a later point?

No. There will be terms of reference for the Core Group to ensure that there is both equality of access and transparency. The boards of both Gloucestershire VCS Alliance and the Summerfield Charitable Trust will provide good governance and manage conflicts of interest.

Do you have more information about the project's learning partner?

The aim is to have the best learning partner possible. If they are in Gloucestershire, this will be an added benefit.

Can you explain what you mean by fiscal hosting?

Yes. It is about finding the best place for the funding to be held once allocated.

What timelines are you working to?

We expect the Core Group to start its work over the summer. The length of time it takes from then until we have the projects up and running is dependent on how much time we devote to community engagement. This will be determined by the Core Group. With a 'fair wind', the Core Group may be putting proposals to the Trust's board towards the end of this year or the start of 2025.

What will happen to the Summerfield Charitable Trust's grant-giving programme?

If you would like to apply to the Trust, applications can be made using their normal application process. More information is available on the Trust's [website](#). You will not be precluded from being involved in this project if you receive a grant from the Trust over the course of the next year.

Is this project about co-producing strategies that will help the Summerfield Charitable Trust invest in the revenue streams from its current capital investment, or is it about the Trust shifting its capital base into the community? And in the long term, thinking about spending out?

This project is about the Trust shifting capital into the community. It is about genuine co-production which means moving away from a group of five trustees making a decision about what is a 'good' application and instead placing that 'control' within local communities.

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What is the value of the funding for individual projects?

The value of the funding will depend on the outcomes of the process. The Trust's accounts can be checked online, so that you can see how much is invested. The co-production process will help to identify where the biggest impact can be made with the funding.

I think there's a real demonstration here of a funder being prepared to act differently. What are your expectations and observations at this point?

It comes down to collaboration and more collaboration. It is thinking about the 'art of the possible' with the money. Please do come on the journey with us.

How can I find out more about this project?

You can find out more on Gloucestershire VCS Alliance's [website](#). If you have any enquiries about the project, please contact Gloucestershire VCS Alliance via email: info@glosvcsalliance.org.uk.

How can I keep updated about the project?

Gloucestershire VCS Alliance will publish updates on their [website](#), social media and in their [mailings](#). You can also follow Gloucestershire VCS alliance on X: [@GlosVCSAlliance](#) and Facebook: [GlosVCSAlliance](#).

How can I find out more about Summerfield Charitable Trust?

The Summerfield Charitable Trust was established in 1989 and has allocated more than £7 million in grants to good causes in Gloucestershire. The Trust has funded a range of community projects including those in the arts, natural heritage, environment, education, recreation and sport. You can find out more about The Summerfield Charitable Trust by visiting their [website](#). You can also find The Summerfield Charitable Trust on X: [@SummerfieldNews](#).