

Commissioner launches £30,000 community grants scheme for a safer Cornwall

22 June

Not all projects that are effective in cutting crime and creating safer communities need to be backed up by millions of pounds of taxpayer's money. In fact, it's often the smallest things that can make the biggest difference.

This week I am launching the Commissioner's Community Grant scheme in Cornwall, a funding pot of £30,000 that communities across the county can apply for to help set up projects or initiatives that fulfil certain criteria. The Devon scheme will be launched next month.

Grants of between £1,000 and £5,000 are available to support community groups undertaking activities that connect communities and policing, prevent and deter crime and protect those who are vulnerable or at risk of abuse.

Communities are the most important partners I've got when it comes to identifying local need and that is what this scheme is all about. We want to support ideas, innovation and new approaches that directly respond to community needs and help reduce, repair or prevent harm where you live.

The scheme aims to provide short term funding (one year only) for projects and initiatives that directly impact communities.

For example, these grants can be used to support the setup of a pilot project which helps evidence proof of concept and community impact or fund a one-off purchase such as CCTV or seed funding for a safer town or a community watch scheme.

The scheme is not aimed at longer term funding so if projects or services become successful they would need to apply for funding from the Police and Crime Commissioner's Impact Scheme or become involved in a full open procurement process which they could readily bid for.

For a successful application, projects applying for these grants must include plans for future sustainability, directly benefit the local community and, of course, align to our police and crime plan – at the heart of which are safe, resilient and connected communities.

Predecessors to this fund have helped dozens of groups in the past which may help you understand the type of initiative we can support.

In 2018, when the theme for our grants was antisocial behaviour (ASB), we helped two fantastic Cornish projects - Young People Leading Young People in Camborne and the St Petroc's Cold Weather Provision.

The Young People Leading Young People initiative is the hard work of the TR14ers Community Dance Charity which was set up to find new ways of reducing youth related antisocial behaviour.

Young people in the town said there was nothing positive for them to do but that they would love to learn street dance, so the police worked with them to set up workshops which were proven to be highly effective in reducing ASB in the town.

Each week the group holds sessions attract up to 60 young people ranging in age from 5 to 21 years old. In 2018 our office supported this initiative to the tune of £2,400.

Another good example is the St Petroc's Cold Weather Provision which received a grant of £2,500 from our office.

St Petroc's works with homeless people in Cornwall and its Cold Weather Provision is an emergency shelter for those who are sleeping rough during the coldest period of the winter months.

The service enables anyone who has no other option than to sleep rough to be offered the option of coming in from the cold and bedding down for the night in a basic, but warm and safe setting.

During the winter of 2018/19, St Petroc's delivered 179 nights worth of Cold Weather Provision across two locations in Cornwall to 89 individuals who accessed the service on 1,306 occasions. All of these people would have had to have slept rough if the provision had not been provided.

More than 68% of St Petroc's clients were found accommodation, or secured accommodation themselves with friends or in the private rented sector and were able to leave Cold Weather Provision to move to somewhere indoors.

As you can see from these examples, there is some great, innovative work taking place across Cornwall, Devon and the isles of Scilly and I am pleased to be able to provide support which can make these projects even more impactful. I look forward to seeing how they develop in the coming year.

The funding is being administered by the Cornwall Community Foundation and anyone who wishes to start the application ball rolling should visit their website at <https://www.cornwallcommunityfoundation.com/introduction-to-grants/>