



NGH Community Event October 19th 2024

NOTES

The Community Foundation

Liz introduced Pete Barrett from the Community Foundation (NorthEast). The Foundation is focussed on giving and philanthropy – matching more than 300 donors with important community causes.

Pete explained how the Foundation works and the types of funding that they provide – with both specific ‘calls for applications’ and ‘general applications’ which can be made at any time. The minimum grant award is £1000, up to a maximum of £10,000 (with some exceptions).

Community Foundation are looking to award £500,000 to environmental and climate issues this financial year. They have also published a Vital Signs report about the impact of climate and environmental issues in the northeast, and this will be a key driver over the next 5 years. A wide range of not-for-profit organisations can apply, and there are clear requirements that each organisations must have, e.g. a recent bank statements, safeguarding policies etc. More details are on their website, but Pete recommended that potential applicants contact one of the fund managers to discuss their project / requirements. Project, operating and capital costs will all be considered. Community Interest Companies can apply, although they will need to provide a business plan.

Pete provided some ‘Top Tips’ for completing applications – with the main message being to keep it simple and to speak to them for advice. Approximately 60% of applications are successful. Applicants are required to provide at least three objectives and will be asked to report on these – a report which will go back to the original funder.

They can also offer support in terms of legal and other advice, sometimes through a grant or sometimes on a pro bono basis. Help in finding a trustee is also available as is guidance on the process of recruiting and training trustees.

Finally, Pete talked about a couple of successful projects including one to establish a farmers’ network in Northumberland in conjunction with the Tyne Rivers Trust and a second one installing solar PV on a village hall.

Liz thanked Pete for a very informative talk which gave a thorough understanding of the work of the Community Foundation, and, in particular, their open and supportive approach.

Copies of the slides are available on the NGH website.

NGH The First Year – Members Feedback

Colin thanked members of NGH who had completed the recent survey. He explained that there had been a 30% response rate which is good for a survey of this kind and gave some confidence in the usefulness of the feedback.

Colin presented a number of slides which gave a summary of the feedback, including a selection of the text responses. A report with the full results has been compiled and this will be made available on the website, together with these slides.

In summary –

- 97% of respondents said that NGH is meeting its objectives.
- 92% thought the events are either ‘useful’ or ‘very useful’ and 96% felt they were either ‘enjoyable’ or ‘very enjoyable’.
- Views on the amount of time for networking during events were more varied with 50% saying it’s ‘just right’, 24% saying there is ‘too little’ and 8% who felt there was ‘too much’.
- Among the suggestions to improve the events was inviting speakers, having more input from members about their projects and having structured time to network.
- 94% of respondents said the Digest was either ‘useful’ or ‘very useful’. There were a number of views that it had become too long but that the division into clearer sections was helpful.
- When asked if the Special Interest Groups on WhatsApp are useful and informative, 41% said that they were ‘partially useful’, 19% said ‘useful’ and 33% said ‘very useful’. There were similarly mixed text responses reflecting that whilst there is a huge amount of useful and interesting posts, information can be difficult to locate at a later date and the groups can be difficult to keep up with.
- 87% of respondents said that the website was ‘easy’ or ‘very easy’ to use, although only 52% had used the Resources section.
- 88% of respondents said they felt better connected and informed as a result of their membership of NGH, with support, reduced isolation, building up contacts and sharing of information being seen as beneficial.
- For community groups there was a sense of being part of something ‘bigger’ and the potential to have greater influence. All respondents said that they would ‘definitely’ or ‘very definitely’ recommend others to join.
- A number of suggestions were made for future training events, including the use of geographic information systems (GIS), applying for funding, using social media and identifying the skills within NGH.
- There were a wide range of suggestions about the future development of NGH, including providing a platform for collaboration between groups, attracting more members, considering online events and becoming a ‘go to’ organisation for friendly guidance, information and skills support.

Colin invited attendees to discuss the results and provide any additional feedback.

Members were then invited to discuss the following questions –

‘What do you think about the feedback that you’ve heard today’ and ‘What else would you like to tell us about the way ahead for NGH?’.

The points made by members are captured below –

What do you think about the feedback that you’ve heard today ?

Group 1

- Overall very positive and consistent feedback which gives confidence that it’s a fair reflection of the overall membership.

Group 2

- Survey feedback felt to be an accurate representation

What else would you like to tell us about the way ahead for NGH ?

Group 1

- Encourage members to be aware of the psychological impact of what they post in the SIGs and its provenance.
- The summary and showcasing of SIG content in the Digest is very helpful.
- Look for more effective ways to engage other members
- Sustain the variation on the content of events. Include presentations and speakers especially with success stories
- Find a way for members to ask for help from other members – a live ‘surgery’,
- Provide a safe space for people to share the negative impact of information / news and the climate / environment crisis.

Group 2

- We enjoy face to face events more than online
- Would like everyone to introduce themselves at the start of the event, e.g. name, organisation, area of interest/expertise/location. Send out list of attendees before event.
- Each meeting could have 5 groups speak for 5 minutes on what they are doing.
- Create a link from NGH to local MP and NCC
- Have an exchange of information. Have speakers.
- Should NGH be a campaigning organisation? Groups that link with each other have a louder voice.
- Recruit new members by connecting with school climate groups through the Digest and group members going into schools. Teachers who run the groups would find the Digest useful.

Group 3

- Use social media – get a college student to manage it or write articles for the website – or should social media be down to individual projects ?
- Should we be actively trying to involve groups of younger people and what would they get from it?
- Teachers might find NGH a useful resource
- Need training / mentoring in committee roles
- Infrastructure / capacity building training.

Group 4

- Need a policy on how SIGs operate and their purpose / etiquette
- Get summaries from the SIG convenors that the whole membership can share
- Are SIGs for planning action or sharing information?

Following the event, the slides and the full report will be published on the website and the Steering Group will identify specific actions to take forward over the coming months.

Next Steps

Mike thanked everyone for their participation and reiterated that the results will be available on the website soon and that the Steering Group will then take forward the feedback. He reminded everyone of the offer of free GIS training and encouraged people to indicate if they are interested. There as a final reminder that the date for the next NGH event is Saturday December 7th for a social / networking morning – more details to follow.