

AGELESS THANET COMMUNITY FUND JAN 2018-OCT 2019



£75,000 distributed to 77 community groups, individuals and businesses



139 applications received



300+ hours of support given



4000+ people engaged in community funded activities or events

ABOUT THE FUND

The Ageless Thanet Community Fund opened in January 2018. Community groups, charities, voluntary organisations or individuals, who had ideas to make Thanet a great place to grow older, were invited to bid for initially up to £1000 and in the final round, £3500.

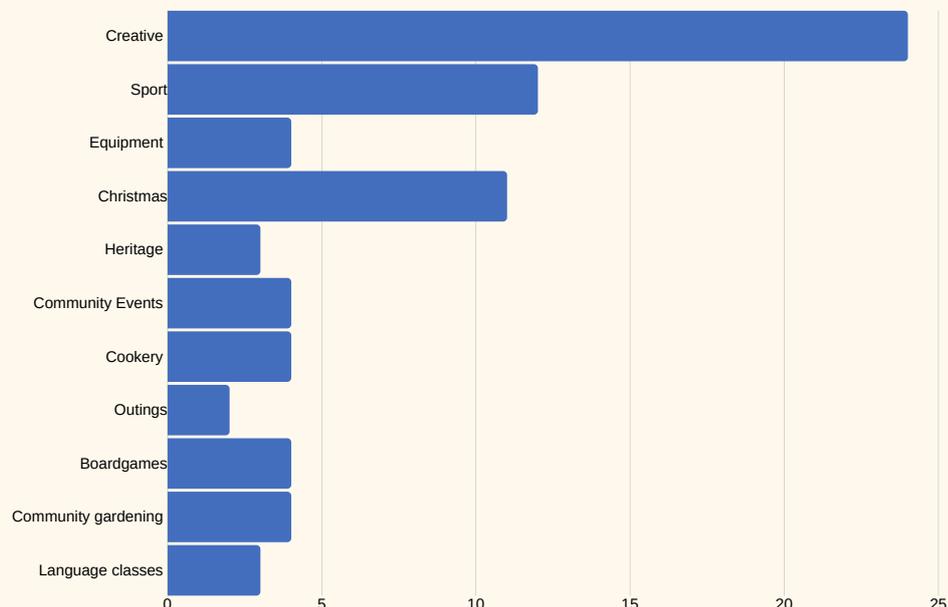
The Community Fund ensured National Lottery Community Fund money was distributed to grass roots community organisations. It enabled small, generally volunteer led organisations who aren't necessarily set up to apply for funding, to be able to benefit while removing some of the risk and trepidation for them.

139 applications were made to the panel over the 8 rounds from January 2018 – March 2019.

Successful applicants could use this funding for equipment, marketing, facilitation, room hire, refreshments etc. The fund, which closed at the end of April, has distributed £75,000 to 77 different community groups, individuals and organisations all dedicated to making Thanet a Great Place to Grow Older.



What was funded



THE APPLICATION PROCESS

Having a simple and easy application process was important from the outset. We wanted applicants to be able to clearly show how and why their idea and project should be funded.

From January 2018 - March 2019 there were 8 funding rounds, with 139 applications received.

The Community Fund Panel

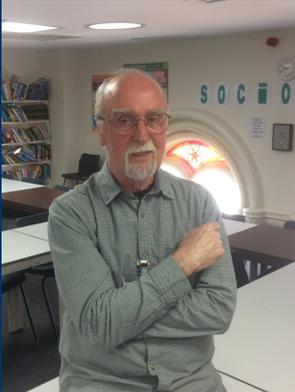
3 members of the Ageless Thanet Governance Board sat as the Community Fund Panel. These individuals, all over 50 Thanet residents, volunteered to be part of the funding panel to assess applications against published criteria at the end of each funding round.

The criteria that the panel used to assess each application were equally weighted and are as follows:

- Supported by older people: how well does the application demonstrate that the idea is supported by older people?
- New projects: does the application clearly demonstrate that this is a new project not duplicated elsewhere, or an existing project that will be accessed by new people?
- How the project will make a difference: how strong a chance does the project have of reducing isolation and loneliness?
- Beneficiaries: how proportionate is the cost to the outcomes for the number of beneficiaries?
Are the beneficiaries part of Ageless Thanet's target group i.e. 50+ residents living within CT7, CT8, CT9, CT10, CT11 and CT12?
- Sustainability: is the project likely to generate long-term community impact and be sustainable beyond the initial funding?

Successful applications needed to evidence that they met all these criteria and score a mean score of 17 or above to be funded.

THE FUNDING PANEL



“Being part of the Community Fund panel has increased my awareness on what’s on offer to local older people. I like being part of helping people and making differences to local older residents' lives. I like the structure of the community fund as it has a fair and transparent panel and decision process. I relished the chance to give new opportunities - it’s easy to do what you’ve always done. I have also been able to visit groups we have awarded funding to and I really enjoyed taking part in life drawing as it was a new challenge for me. Ageless Thanet has made me more aware and more comfortable of who I am and allows me to engage with like-minded, enthusiastic people. It has also made me try new things and challenge myself.” A.Longley

“It’s been really nice to be part of the Community Fund Panel. The fund has enabled us to support local groups and it’s been really great, as a volunteer, to make the decisions as to where the money goes. It has definitely made me feel more involved and invested in the community.” A.Brenton

“I am part of the governance panel, community funding panel and the finance committee. Ageless Thanet has a fantastic team who are always lovely and supportive and make me feel that my opinion is valued and I can help shape services. It allows me to feed into the project and represent local older people. As part of the community fund panel I have learnt about what services are available and the impact of what we have funded. It has made me think about the long-term impact of funding, sustainability and partnership working. I feel we have also made other groups look at services they can deliver for older people.” P.Hancock



CAPACITY BUILDING

For most of the applicants it was the first time they had applied for any funding. We wanted to demystify the process and give them as much chance of success as possible, both with our fund and future funding.

A very informative few hours. I now feel charged and energised to go out into the funding world. The help from Ageless Thanet and this day is immeasurable.

The support was invaluable I had never applied for funding before, now I know of other places where we can apply for funding from and I will be more confident in applying to them.

300+ hours of 1-2-1 and group support

Loved social media...what one can do!!

Excellent delivery of information, I am quite excited with the prospect of potential funding. Thank you!

THANET MACULAR DEGENERATION GROUP COMMUNITY FUND



"It's very rewarding to get the goods that have given our members so much pleasure back to their lives. They have had to give up many of their hobbies due to their eye sight and the audio books enable members to enjoy books in a different form. More books mean more members can come, and we have had new members join. The support I received from Heather for the application was brilliant and the help is there for all groups who would like to apply."

WHAT WAS FUNDED?

- Audio books
- Craft equipment
- Christmas event

WHAT WAS THE IMPACT?

The Thanet Macular Degeneration Group has over 50 members and it continues to grow. The members are all about friendship and supporting each other; they regularly go out on trips and meet up.

Rita applied for the Ageless Thanet Community Fund for a range of audio books including television series, films, comedies, short stories and more.

The craft equipment is used by the group to make items to sell to raise funds for the group, helping with its sustainability. It also helps members take up a new interest, or help others with a skill that they have.



THANET THUNDERERS BOCCIA CLUB

COMMUNITY FUND



"In May 2017 I went on an 8 week Boccia course through the wellbeing workstream. I really enjoyed it and was approached to take on running a little group with 2 others. I really enjoyed the game so did a club leader course and started the Friday group.

The funding has made the group feel worthwhile – having someone see what we do as valuable, and believe in what we do has given us all confidence and professionalism."

Terry, coach

WHAT WAS FUNDED?

- Boccia equipment
- Coaching course

WHAT WAS THE IMPACT?

The Thanet Thunderers grew out of an Ageless Thanet Wellbeing Course. They meet weekly on a Friday and have 20+ members. Boccia is designed to be played by all physical abilities and the mixed group promotes friendship, exercise and some healthy competition.

The funding has focused the group, given them confidence and they now take part in county and national competitions.



THANET COMMUNITY FOREST SCHOOL

COMMUNITY FUND



It has opened doors for us with other groups and the community and enabled us to run workshops aimed at over 50's. We have also subsequently held intergenerational workshops to break down barriers and challenge age perceptions, reduce social isolation and promote community cohesion. Older participants have subsequently met up with each other outside of the project and socialised with each other. The young people involved in the forest school now enjoy helping and talking to the older participants and work with them when they are on site.

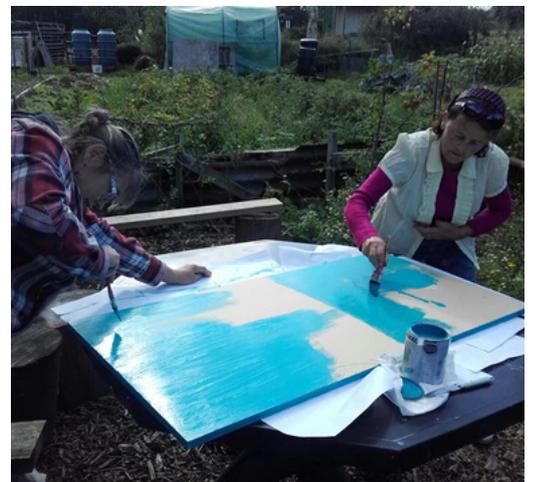
Sally, project co-ordinator

WHAT WAS FUNDED?

- Jam and mosaic equipment
- Course facilitator

WHAT WAS THE IMPACT?

The workshops brought local older residents together and promoted working as a group to reach a common goal. The mosaic workshops helped with participants creativity as they were asked to design a large mosaic for the site. Both helped to reduce isolation, improve wellbeing and encouraged more local older people to become involved in the forest school, attracted volunteers and highlighted the work we are doing.



ST PETER'S RENEW WELLBEING CAFE

COMMUNITY FUND



We would not have been able to open the Renew Wellbeing Café without the funded equipment. The café is a place where everybody knows your name, where all are valued and no one is labelled. It is a space where anyone can suggest an activity, share a hobby, learn a new skill, make connections and be signposted to any help they need. It is a space where it is understood that we are all on a sliding scale of mental wellbeing.

Although this is a church led initiative, it is a space where any faith or none are welcome to belong. Our aim is to show people their purpose and value in the community, to teach new skills and to provide a space of safety and relaxation.

Pam, project lead

WHAT WAS FUNDED?

- Kitchen and Cafe equipment
- Arts and craft equipment

WHAT WAS THE IMPACT?

The Café has 30 regular attendees who have all experienced improved mental wellbeing since attending.

The Café has developed some great community connections since opening and are working alongside other local community projects. For example one of the Ageless Thanet volunteers heard about the Café and now runs British Sign Language sessions for those wishing to learn a new skill.

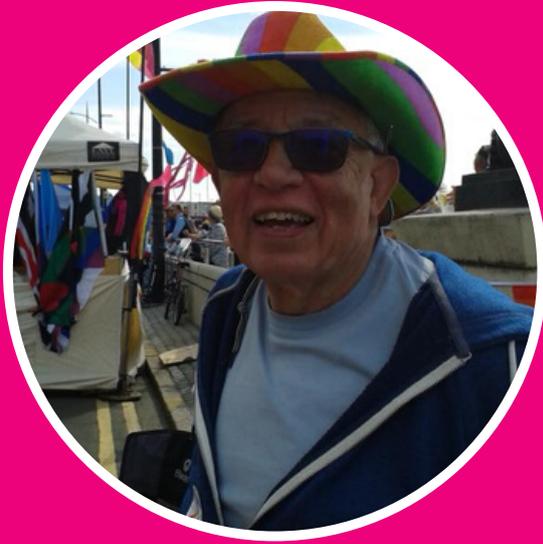
Referrals to the Café also come from the local GP, mental health and social inclusion projects.

The Café allows people attending to feel included in what is going on.



THANET LGBT 50+ GROUP

COMMUNITY FUND



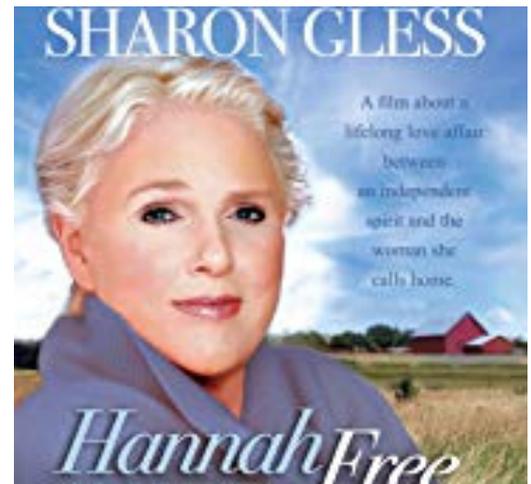
There is no doubt that Ageless Thanet was the catalyst which created the group, and our participation at Pride enabled us to kickstart things.

Having a stand at Margate Pride gave the group a new focus and direction and enabled us to launch on a wider scale. We signed up an additional 30 new members on the day!

Roger Newman

WHAT WAS FUNDED?

- Support for consultations on how to address older LGBT people's needs.
- An event at Northdown House
- Promotional material for Margate Pride
- Film screening at the Palace Cinema



WHAT WAS THE IMPACT?

Social isolation is a significant problem. According to Age UK, up to 75% of older lesbians, gay men and bisexuals live alone compared with 33% of the general older population. 90% have no children to call upon during difficult times.

The group now has 60 members, a committee and a means of supporting and communicating with its members and the wider community, ensuring that the voice of this marginalised group is heard.



CLIFTONVILLE COMMUNITY CENTRE

COMMUNITY FUND



It has been invaluable. It has enabled us to carry on our work and help our vulnerable clients. For example, money can be stopped if clients don't respond to a text about their Universal Credit in time. To do this they need to logon to their journal. Without our help and the ability to go online here and work out what is needed, they would suffer sanctions which could stop their money, impacting on their Housing Benefit etc. Our service is unique in the area – offering translation and online assistance to help job searching, benefits enquiries, setting up email addresses etc – we wouldn't be able to help as many as we do without this funding.

Paul Conaghan, support worker

WHAT WAS FUNDED?

- Two laptops

WHAT WAS THE IMPACT?

The Community Centre, based in one of the most deprived areas in the country, hosts a wide range of services within Cliftonville, delivering welfare and supporting and providing a host of activities for clubs, events and meetings.

With the increasing move to everything being online, including universal credit, job searching, making doctors appointments etc, their client base does not necessarily have access to the internet at home or access to computers.

The centre also offers a translation service as well as the hardware and internet access.

They have over 1000 cases per month who can now be supported with this access.



SEW AND SO COMMUNITY FUND



Getting funding from the Community Fund to hold sewing classes has re-ignited my passion for both sewing and tutoring. It's also enabled me to meet new people in a circle different to my usual business focused world, helping me through the transition from full time business back into tutoring.

Running the workshops is fun and has lifted my spirits no end, at the end of a very difficult period of my life. It's also really lovely to see someone who believes they have no skill walk out with a completed bag and a renewed sense of pride.

Jocelyn Scott

WHAT WAS FUNDED?

- Equipment and refreshments for 3 sewing courses

WHAT WAS THE IMPACT?

Jo is a successful business woman who was in the process of winding up her bar business. She was really starting to feel concerned about what would happen when it closed.

Running her own business and being Director of the Broadstairs Food Festival meant her life was very customer focused and actually one step removed from being involved.

Funding to run these workshops has opened up new avenues to her as well as the chance to meet new people. It has given her the renewed spirit to see the opportunities that are out there. She has since enrolled on an Adult Ed Sewing and Dressmaking course, as well as continuing to meet with the friends she made running Sew and So.



FEELGOOD UKULELE GROUP

COMMUNITY FUND



Being involved with Ukulele Group has given me a sense of purpose, involvement and engagement. Ageless Thanet has connections and tendrils with so many other things - it's so trusted and relied upon to be the place for over 50's activities in Thanet.

The Festival made our group feel like they are superstars! 460 people attended, lots of their friend and families came and saw their parents and grandparents performing on a stage - it was wonderful!

The group is more than just learning to play the ukulele - it's about the craic, the family and the friendship.

Pam Holmes

WHAT WAS FUNDED?

- Music stands and instruments
- Margate Ukulele Festival

WHAT WAS THE IMPACT?

The Feelgood Ukulele group met during an 8 week wellbeing Course. Once this finished, they started an informal group meeting once a week at the Feelgood Factory. The group soon started going out and performing at nursing homes, libraries and other events. To help with the groups progress and keep everyone interested they asked for funding for music stands, a bass ukulele and synthesiser.

The Festival came from a session where the group decided they would like to play with others and challenged themselves to put on a festival!

The group now feel buoyed up and are planning next years festival already!



WESTGATE ALLOTMENT ASSOCIATION

COMMUNITY FUND



The funding has helped with the Associations vision of the allotment being a place for everyone. We've noticed more interest from our members already and we are really positive that we will see a big change next season when we can hold some more social events (that we are already planning! Eg sausage sizzle on bonfire night) Being able to have a shop helps with the older plotholders who are alone and maybe don't have a car. They can now buy at the plot and there is always a committee member on hand to help them carry it.

Tony Whiting

WHAT WAS FUNDED?

- A Shed
- Petrol Mower

WHAT WAS THE IMPACT?

The Allotment Association had recently seen a change of leadership and the new group were keen to use this momentum to make changes to the running of the allotment.

The committee feel that the funding sped up their project by 18 months, has given them credibility, and allowed the members to get involved in their vision and see the allotment as a 'family'

The 1-2-1 support that the group received has also given them the skills and confidence to apply for different funding in the future.

"I'm now interested in how things work regarding funding, something that interests me and I know will benefit the groups that I am involved in."



KEY LESSONS

Importance of being a trusted, local organisation

The level of the funding offered (£1000 - £3500) meant that the majority of applications we received were from small community groups or individuals. Being able to phone and talk to a member of staff, meet up in a local coffee shop or visit the individual group made the process more 'human' for the applicants, some of whom had never applied for funding before.

This has led to good relationships being built with the applicants, which promotes the project further with those community groups that we funded, we were also able to share their information to other project participants.

We made a conscious decision to allow time for developmental support to applicants, understanding that individuals may not have completed this type of application before and understanding what makes a good application.

Benefits

The impact on both the individual who applied, and the recipients shouldn't be underestimated. Anecdotal evidence from applicants includes **'getting funding makes us feel worthwhile'**, **'it gave us legitimacy'**, **'we felt supported'**, **'I'll definitely apply for other things now'**.

For a relatively small amount of funding we have also seen groups become more sustainable and more able to ensure future inclusion of ageing members (Westgate Community Allotment, The Broadstairs Town Shed, Ramsgate Active Retirement Association, Thanet Thunderers, to pick just a few) giving long term benefits.

Community Engagement

Marketing and sharing the opportunity to as wide an audience as possible was very important. We ensured that all workstreams knew of the opportunity and publicised it where possible.

We used eye-catching, easy to understand marketing material and distributed to local community venues, posted on social media and distributed through email contacts before each fund deadline.

Regular articles in our newsletters also highlighted groups supported by the fund as well as upcoming deadlines.

We held an information event and 1-2-1 advice sessions prior to the final funding round to support groups to apply for the higher amount we were offering. We saw this event, and the 1-2-1 support we gave as a community capacity building exercise, providing support in the longer term to develop a thriving civil society sector.

KEY LESSONS - CONT.

Funding less traditional organisations

Our funding guidelines did not limit applications to those groups that were already delivering services to older people or those that were constituted or non-constituted community groups. We welcomed applications from individuals and businesses. This has had some interesting and surprising outcomes, particularly from businesses/individuals and community groups who weren't delivering events for older people.

Being able to contribute to creating an ecosystem that supports older people has meant that these businesses are now starting to look at tailoring their offerings to take into account an older demographic.

Feedback from these also show that being part of Ageless Thanet felt like being part of a community and brought with it a reputation of being trusted and supportive to over 50's.

CONCLUSION

The Community Fund has been a great success! As a model of funding, it delivered huge reach and impact, far beyond the sum of the individual awards.

Our community capacity building has engaged individuals and groups, with many reporting that they now feel able to apply for further funding.

Welcoming applications from less traditional avenues (individuals, businesses, groups looking to attract new members, rather than needing to be doing something new), has also supported Making Thanet as a Great Place to Grow Older...

