



NEWS RELEASE

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NEW YEAR GRANTS HELP LOCAL CHARITIES

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101 voluntary and community groups across the Essex celebrated the New Year with the welcome news that they would be receiving grants totalling £391,884 from the Grassroots Grants programme.

These latest grants bring the total distributed since the programme was launched in August 2008 to nearly £900,000.

The Chelmsford Arts Society was among the groups to benefit in this latest round of Grassroots Grants. They received £3,186 to buy some demountable staging and a covered trailer to help them with their artwork exhibitions and meetings.

Local grantmaking trust, Essex Community Foundation is managing the £2 million Grassroots Grants programme which is a Government initiative funded by the Office of the Third Sector to support community-based projects meeting local needs across Essex. Caroline Taylor, Programmes Director at Essex Community Foundation said, "In light of the economic downturn and the fierce pressures on funding, all charities will be facing difficult times ahead. However, demand for the service of our local organisations continues to increase, so a programme like Grassroots Grants, which will run until March 2011, can give some reassurance and encouragement to our local charities."

The Grassroots Grants programme is open to any voluntary and community group in Essex, Southend and Thurrock, which is predominately volunteer-led and has an income of under £20,000 per annum. To discuss an application call the Foundation's grants team on 01245 356018.

As well as the Grants programme, the Foundation has been set a Challenge to raise £3.3 million in endowed funding in order to be able to draw down matched funding of £1.65 million. To date, nearly £400,000 has been raised, but there is still a way to go to reach the target before the Challenge ends in March 2011. The Foundation is therefore appealing to all companies and individuals to support their appeal and take advantage of this Government initiative which enables them to uplift donations by at least 50%. At the end of the programme, the invested £5 million fund will give a permanent source of funding to support voluntary and community groups in Essex, Southend and Thurrock.

For more information about the Foundation's work in Essex, the Grassroots programme and to make a donation, visit www.essexcommunityfoundation.org.uk or call Jo Murphy on 01245 355947.

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Notes to Editors:

Essex Community Foundation was set up in 1996 and has established a grants programme which has seen nearly 3,000 Essex based charities and community groups receive over £11.2 million in grants. Funds are distributed on behalf of a wide range of donors who want their charitable giving to be accessible to local charities. www.essexcommunityfoundation.org.uk

Community Foundations are independent charities committed to supporting projects that engage local people. Since the 1980s, a nationwide network of Community Foundations has developed, endorsed by many major public figures and leading companies.

There are 1000's of charities and voluntary groups working for the community to create a richer society for all. Community Foundations build endowed funds and make grants to these organisations.

- There are 55 local Community Foundations in the UK covering 94% of the population
- Collectively they manage endowed funds of circa £200 million
- In 2006/07 Community Foundations distributed grants totalling £75million.

Grassroots Grants

Grassroots Grants, funded by Office of the Third Sector (OTS) and administered by the Community Development Foundation (CDF), recognises the vital contribution these 'grassroots groups' make to improving our communities.

Over three years, Grassroots Grants will support the sector in building stronger, more active communities with two complementary approaches. An £80 million grants programme will make small grants available to grassroots groups across England. An innovative £50 million endowments match challenge will enable local funders to raise donations on a matched basis and invest them to sustain grassroots funding into the future.

Essex Community Foundation is delivering the Grassroots Grants programme in Essex. For more information visit www.essexcommunityfoundation.org.uk

The Community Development Foundation (CDF) is the Lead National Partner appointed to administer, support, monitor and evaluate Grassroots Grants on behalf of Office of the Third Sector (OTS).

CDF is the leading source of intelligence, guidance and delivery on community development in England and across the UK. Our mission is to lead community development analysis and strategy to empower people to influence decisions that affect their lives. For more information, go to www.cdf.org.uk

Office of the Third Sector

As part of the Cabinet Office, the Office of the Third Sector leads work across government to support the environment for a thriving third sector (voluntary and community groups, social enterprises, charities, cooperatives and mutuals), enabling the sector to campaign for change, deliver public services, promote social enterprise and strengthen communities. For further information, please go to www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/thirdsector