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STARTS

Summerfield Charitable Trust announces new funding strategy to improve the lives of local communities

The Summerfield Charitable Trust has announced that it is working in partnership with Gloucestershire VCS Alliance to take forward a pioneering investment strategy to improve the lives of thousands of people in Gloucestershire. The Strategy will also enable the Trust to provide a fitting legacy for Ron Summerfield, whose incredible collection of antiques led to the formation of the Trust over thirty years ago.

As the value of the Trust's investments decline, the Trustees have spent the last year considering how they can make the biggest difference to charitable causes across Gloucestershire in the spirit of Ron Summerfield's generous gift to the county. Rather than continue to distribute diminishing sums to county charities, the Trustees have taken the decision to invest the capital in innovative, game-changing projects that enable charities to make a lasting difference to lives in Gloucestershire.

In the Strategy published today, the Trust announced that Gloucestershire VCS Alliance will work with charitable organisations and communities in the county to co-produce a range of investment proposals. These proposals will be underpinned by six core themes which are based on extensive research and are closely aligned to the Trust's aims and objectives. The themes are:

1. A Connected Society, which will focus on building more strongly connected communities;
2. Aging Well, which will focus on supporting older people to have a good quality of life;
3. Arts and Culture, which will focus on developing ways of increasing participation in creativity, arts and culture;
4. Children and Families, which will focus on building support for local families with children under the age of 5;
5. Action for Nature and Climate, which will focus on encouraging individual and collective behaviours that reduce the use of carbon; and
6. Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) infrastructure, which aims to develop organisational support that enables the sector to innovate and thrive.

It is expected that the Trust will then agree to transfer a proportion of its assets into a variety of community-led projects across the county before completing the work of the Trust. During implementation of this new approach, the Trust will continue to distribute grants through the application process outlined on its website.

The Strategy includes a commitment to increasing capacity within the VCSE sector and developing new ways of thinking and working. It also emphasises a commitment to placing the people of Gloucestershire at the heart of decision-making and ensuring that any proposals developed foster community resilience and cohesion.

David Owen, Chair of the Summerfield Charitable Trust said "We are pleased to announce that we are working in partnership with Gloucestershire VCS Alliance to take forward a progressive investment strategy for the Summerfield Charitable Trust. We believe that this new approach to community investment will enable the Trust to distribute its assets in the most impactful way, while also leaving a lasting legacy within local communities".

Matt Lennard, Chief Officer of Gloucestershire VCS Alliance said “We believe that the knowledge held within communities is the key to addressing our six core themes. We hope that working with The Summerfield Charitable Trust to develop this project opens a door to new ways of working which give autonomy to the people who live in our communities”.

Gloucestershire VCS Alliance will soon start to recruit to the project’s Core Group. This Group will help shape the six investment themes into tangible recommendations about where the Trust can invest its assets. Both The Summerfield Charitable Trust and Gloucestershire VCS Alliance are encouraging representatives from the VCSE sector in Gloucestershire interested in joining the Group to express an interest by 3 May 2024.

Anyone interested in finding out more about the project is invited to an online Question & Answer session on 29 April 2024 from 2 to 3:30 pm. You can find out more about this project, apply to join the Core Group and download a copy of the Strategy by visiting www.glosvcsalliance.org.uk.

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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:

www.summerfield.org.uk/. You can also find The Summerfield Charitable Trust on X: @SummerfieldNews.

About Gloucestershire VCS Alliance

Gloucestershire VCS Alliance is the independent voice that informs, strengthens and develops the VCSE sector in Gloucestershire. Gloucestershire VCS Alliance promotes equal partnerships between the VCSE, public and private sectors and supports the sector in the range of ways, such as sending out information updates, providing sector specific training and hosting Go Volunteer Glos. You can find out more about Gloucestershire VCS Alliance by visiting:

www.glosvcsalliance.org.uk. You can also find Gloucestershire VCS Alliance on X: @GlosVCSAlliance and Facebook: GlosVCSAlliance.

Contact Information

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