

From: publicagroup

Subject: Launch of new crowdfunding platform - Westhive

Dear Witney Forum members,

We really value the work you do to support residents. Times are tough. We appreciate that applying for funding can take a lot of time and is often complicated with no guarantee of success. We want to make the process simpler so we are launching Westhive, a brand new community crowdfunding platform dedicated to West Oxfordshire.

We think this is an exciting development and something that has huge potential for your organisation and projects in your area.

We're not doing this alone - but working in partnership with Spacehive, the UK's leading civic crowdfunding platform. They are very experienced. We hope that the platform will attract lots of project ideas and eventually secure funding for them from a wide variety of sources, including the Council. Together we will be helping to fund and deliver projects to create a positive and lasting impact on our district.

The Council will pledge up to £120,000 to projects on the platform. We are actively encouraging other large institutions to use the platform to distribute their funding and of course we will be encouraging residents to get involved and support the projects that matter to them with pledges from as little as £2.

We know that you as residents and group leaders are best placed to understand what is needed in your community, whether it's a new play park, a lunch club, a community energy project or a new teen space. So please do get involved - propose a project or just pass on the message that Westhive is here. Westhive provides a new way to reach funders, tell residents what you do and what help you need - plus all project creators get lots of support along the way from the team behind the scenes. Projects can be big or small.

For the Council we are looking to prioritise our funding on projects which meet our priorities to: build resilient communities, preserve and enhance our environment, support ecological projects, and address climate change challenges. But this is a platform for everyone and projects with other priorities are welcome. We hope that you will consider bringing a project forward or tell others about the opportunity.

The Council is allocating a portion of our pledge pot – at least £20,000 – specifically to youth projects - especially those led by young people themselves. We know from our Youth Needs Assessment that young people have ideas and want to see things change. We hope this will give them the encouragement to come forward and take the lead, driving the changes they want to see in their community.

Projects can seek capital or project funding - it's simply that we want to promote ventures that make a difference.

On the 16th October we are hosting a Project Creators event where you can hear all about how Westhive works including how to get your project included. In the meantime we have set up a new Westhive web page which includes lots of background information and how to book onto the event on the 16th - <https://www.spacehive.com/movement/westhive/>

Healthy Communities Officer