



The Digbeth Trust

Active in Turning Community Ideas
Into Community Action

Update 1 – January 2007

WELCOME

Hello and welcome to the first edition of our new update. We will be issuing an update about our work every two months in order to keep our members and other stakeholders informed about our activities and services.

In this edition you will find out about:

- Our **Professional and Technical Aid Service** (PTAS)
- Our forthcoming **funding round** for groups working on promoting healthy lifestyles in Birmingham
- Funding opportunities from the **William Dudley Trust**
- Our **policy and partnership** work.

You will also find out about how we are developing our strategic plan for 2007/08 onwards.

Check out our website on a regular basis as we will keep it updated with information about our services and the work of others.

The next edition of this update will include more detailed information about our grant programmes and PTAS service.



We welcome your feedback on this update – and on all our services. Please contact us if you would like to know more.

ABOUT THE DIGBETH TRUST

The Digbeth Trust is a development support organisation offering services to **voluntary and community groups** and **public and charitable funders** across the West Midlands.

Our Mission

The Digbeth Trust exists to enable the development of an influential, effective, independent and sustainable voluntary and community sector across the West Midlands through the influencing of policy and the provision of expertise.

Our Services

We provide specialist support to voluntary and community groups through our register of quality-assured consultants, links to other sources of support and access to funds.

We are a not-for-profit charitable company and a membership organisation.

To find out more about The Digbeth Trust and the services we offer please contact us at:

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OUR 2006 AGM

Our AGM took place in November 2006 and was attended by over 50 members and supporters. We had presentations from two groups that the Trust had recently supported – West Midlands Somali Association and Birmingham Empowerment Training Initiative (BETI).

We also had a presentation from Mary-Jane Peach – the West Midlands Regional Development Officer for Capacitybuilders – about future developments for infrastructure support in the region.

Two new trustees were elected at the AGM. They are:

- **Polly Goodwin** – an independent consultant with many years experience of working in and for the voluntary sector.
- **Safaraz Ali** – who works for Pathways First, a voluntary group supporting people from black and minority ethnic communities into employment.

This means we now have 9 trustees. We are currently undertaking a review of the governance of the Trust to ensure we are complying with the highest standards. We plan to recruit more new trustees to fill key gaps during the spring.

You can download copies of our annual report for 2005/06 from our website.



Some photos from the 2006 AGM

OUR STRATEGIC PLAN FOR 2007/08 ONWARDS

We are currently finalising our Strategic Plan which will set out our key objectives and workplan for the future.

One of our main targets for 2007/08 will be to extend the reach of our services further outside Birmingham.

The Plan will be available to download from our website from the end of February.

THE WILLIAM DUDLEY TRUST

The Digbeth Trust administers the William Dudley Trust's grantmaking. The WDT funds groups in Birmingham and gives priority to smaller charities benefiting older people – those older people who are frail, housebound, at risk or experiencing ill health, poverty, disadvantage or disability. The average grant is currently £250.

For more information and application details please see our website.

HEALTHY LIFESTYLES GRANT PROGRAMME

We have once again been commissioned by the Heart of Birmingham Teaching Primary Care Trust to administer their Healthy Lifestyles Small Grants Programme in 2007.

The Healthy Lifestyles Programme aims to involve voluntary and community groups in tackling and preventing obesity by:

- Reducing barriers to and promote the uptake of healthy eating, and/or physical activity
- Increasing understanding of the barriers to healthy eating and/or physical activity
- Increasing skills and knowledge among communities
- Increasing support in communities for weight loss and management

To be eligible for funding, organisations must be a voluntary or community organisation based in the Birmingham wards of Aston, Bordesley Green, Handsworth Wood, Ladywood, Lozells and East Handsworth, Nechells, Soho, Sparkbrook and Springfield.

Grants of up to £7,000 are available.

The deadline for applications is midday on the 7th May 2007. Application packs will be available from The Digbeth Trust from the 1st March 2007.

Heart of Birmingham Teaching 
Primary Care Trust

SPECIALIST SUPPORT PLUS

The Trust is the lead partner in a new project, funded by Capacitybuilders, called Specialist Support Plus. The project will increase coordination between specialist capacity building services in Birmingham.

We will set up 3 networks for the main providers and funders of specialist support. These networks will focus on:

- Enabling frontline organisations to be better able to access high quality specialist support services;
- Improving coordination between the providers of specialist support services – to reduce duplication, identify gaps and improve quality;
- Improving how specialist organisations work on equalities and diversity issues.

We will hold 3 events to share the outcome of this project with other organisations.

Our partners in the project are Birmingham Race Action Partnership, Birmingham Voluntary Service Council, BAYC and the Development Agencies Network.

Check out our website for more information.



WHAT DO WE MEAN BY SPECIALIST SUPPORT?

The Digbeth Trust specialises in certain kinds of capacity building support to voluntary and community organisations.

We help groups to access:

- In-depth knowledge in a specialist subject area (eg planning, building design, feasibility studies, legal, etc)
- Temporary expertise from specialist consultants at the time it is needed (eg research, training, business planning).

Where we cannot help we will refer groups on to other sources of support.

PROFESSIONAL & TECHNICAL AID SERVICE (PTAS)

Phase 1 of our PTAS service is now fully up and running. PTAS offers:

- to voluntary and community groups: access to quality-assured consultants who can help you to improve your services and organisation;
- to consultants: access to a wide range of opportunities to make a difference to voluntary and community groups;
- to other partner organisations: access to our database of quality-assured consultants to help with needs assessments, service evaluations, etc.

PTAS is a **free** service for voluntary and community organisations in the West Midlands. Currently we can only fund a small number of consultancy each year. However, for every group that contacts us we will:

- Assess your needs;
- Help you write a consultancy brief;
- Help you find a quality assured consultant;
- Give you advice about how to manage the consultancy.

If we cannot fund the consultancy ourselves we will signpost you to other sources of possible funding or organisations that might be able to help free of charge.



During 2007 Phase 2 of PTAS is looking at the development of a skills brokerage service (eg sharing expertise between voluntary groups) and pro bono services (eg accessing free help from the private sector).

For more information please contact us or see our website.



OUR APPROACH:

We aim to deliver real outcomes for the groups and partners we work with. Our approach is to:

- tailor our support to the specific needs of individual groups;
- work with groups to transfer skills to build their capacity;
- focus on sustainable development – so that groups and projects develop realistically;
- facilitate links between groups and the wider policy and funding environment in which they are working.

OUR IMPACT:

Recent evaluations show that the Trust is:

- Effective at reaching marginalised communities and groups;
- An effective administrator of grant funds – delivering positive outcomes for groups, individuals, communities and funders;
- Effective at helping groups to build their own capacity – thereby having a lasting impact on the efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability of the groups we work with;
- Effective at helping to lever-in additional financial and non-financial resources to the sector.

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