

# **Midlothian Council Small Grants Programme Communications Plan**

July 2016

# Background

Midlothian Council Small Grants Programme supports local projects aimed at improving the quality of life of people living in Midlothian.

Grant applications for 2017/18 open from 29 August 2016 and close on 7 October 2016. Applications, for grants of up to £3000 are available under three separate streams:

- Developing Communities
- Employability, Learning and Training
- Health and Physical Activities

## Purpose

This communication plan sets out how Midlothian Council will promote the 2017/18 Small Grants Programme to prospective applicants to ensure effective communication and engagement.

# Communication's Plan Objectives

- Increase uptake by promoting the Small Grants, and the availability of financial support from its different funding streams, to as wide a range of Midlothian community groups, charities and social enterprises as possible.
- Raise general awareness of the Small Grants programme and demonstrate their value in supporting specific projects and improving outcomes across Midlothian.
- Encourage and support applications from communities that experience high levels of disadvantage and have been underrepresented in previous funding rounds.

## Key messages

- The aim of the Small Grants Programme is to provide funding for local projects aimed at improving the quality of life of people living in Midlothian communities. A community can either mean a geographical area or a community of interest.
- Applications, for grants of up to £3000, can be submitted by community groups, charities or social enterprises.
- There are three funding streams and applications can be made to more than one funding stream.

*Gala day funding for 2017/18 is not provided by the Small Grants Programme but is now administered by the Resource Directorate – correspondence will be sent to organisers explaining the process for allocation.*

- Applications for 2017/18 must be submitted between 29 August and 7 October 2016.

# Target Audiences

- Community groups
- Charities
- Local residents
- Third sector groups
- Social enterprises
- Faith groups
- Partner organisations
- Specific interest groups

# Communications Approach

- Revise design and content of advert/ poster to make it more eye-catching and accessible
- Simplify grant application form
- Illustrate value of Small Grants Programme to groups/ communities by using examples of previous successful applications
- Use mix of media channels including local press and community radio
- Place greater emphasis on use of social media with regular posts during application period
- Ensure publicity emphasises the support available to local groups in the form of further information and assistance in completing applications, generating ideas and developing new groups
- Disseminate information as widely as possible through existing networks, council contacts, previous applicants and partner organisations

## Evaluation

The success of this communications plan will be evaluated after the closing date, based on the number of responses received and on feedback from local groups and individuals on publicity and the application process. We will continue to collate recipients feedback to ensure lessons are learnt and processes can be improved.

# Key communications activities

What	How	Who	Why	When
Launch fund applications	Launch press release/ photo Council website Local press Evening News Local radio Community websites Social media Direct mailings to local groups Posters distributed	Communications and Marketing/ Communities Team /MVA	Promote funding scheme and encourage applications	W/B 29 August
Press advert	Midlothian Advertiser	Communications and Marketing	Promote funding scheme and encourage applications	7 September 2016
Social Media campaign	Twitter and Facebook	Communications and Marketing	Promote funding scheme and encourage applications	Weekly reminders from 5 Sept
Workshop sessions Penicuik 14 Sept 2-4 Bonnyrigg 20 Sept 2-4 Dalkeith 13 Sept 5-7 Gorebridge 27 Sept 5-7 Mayfield 7 Sept 5-7	Invitations to local groups	MVA/ Communities Team	To increase local uptake, especially in priority areas	Sept 2016
Profile success of previously funded projects	Press/ web article and photo	Communications and Marketing	Promote funding scheme through positive examples to encourage applications	W/B 12 September
Reminder that application closing date is approaching	Web Local media Social media Local radio	Communications and Marketing	Reminder	W/B 26 September
Applications close	Social media	Communications and Marketing	Final reminder	Thursday 6 Oct [Closing date