

# BERKSHIRE COMMUNITY CHARITY SEEKS YOUR SUPPORT

FOCUS ON THE IMPORTANT WORK OF THE BERKSHIRE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

**I**n this difficult economic time, where for many organisations survival is the key objective and where the ability to engage in philanthropy or CSR has become a nice to have, intelligent giving is often very low on the agenda. But, it is at just these times that intelligent giving can reap considerable benefits for those companies with limited resources to invest, and where careful investment of such resources can make a real difference.

One organisation that excels in helping companies to invest their resources charitably is the Berkshire Community Foundation. A key facilitator and enabler to companies within the Thames Valley, such as Panasonic and Mars, the Foundation celebrated its 25th birthday in November. Despite this longevity, few companies realise what a useful service the Foundation can provide them with locally in ensuring that their charitable giving brings a real return on their investment in the local community.

Andrew Middleton, chief executive of the Foundation, explains: "When done well, charitable investment can have real benefits for the business; building reputation, enthusing employees, contributing to successful recruitment and retention, and providing an opportunity to put into practice their values whilst making a real difference to both the work place and the local community. Poorly done however, charitable investment can result in a cost for the company with little if any return."

85 per cent of donations made in the UK currently go to the five per cent largest charities. Whether it is the comfort of a brand name or belief in a big cause, a donation to a large charity seems to provide a safe charitable investment. Whilst a donation of this type may generate a local PR opportunity, the exposure is often lost as the story struggles



Thursday Stroke Club in Bracknell: Twenty or so adults meet twice a month for friendship and support. The Berkshire Community Foundation made a grant for transport costs as many of the members are frail and the offer of transport is crucial for them to be able to attend the club. This is very typical of the many small local groups the organisation funds across the county, each serving a very specific need in the local community

to compete with similar stories and editors find it hard to see a local angle.

Giving locally provides a chance to make a real local connection and tie in visibly with any organisation's CSR policy and aims, together with a PR story that builds word of mouth with longevity in the sight of potential customers, suppliers and employees. The key is finding groups that will be a suitable match to the company itself; Berkshire Community Foundation specialises in placing funds with local charities and voluntary groups through its work with over 300 local community groups and charities each year - carefully vetting and assessing potential grant applicants and ensuring that promised outcomes are met.

The Foundation now has a partnership with KliC4Training (Knowledge & Learning in the Community), the well known corporate training group. Through

**“ It is more difficult to give money away intelligently than it is to earn it in the first place ”**

Andrew Carnegie

this partnership Berkshire Community Foundation and KLIC4 can help you set up impactful sessions around team, leadership and personal development themes, which are all built around a live, local charity project. From a cost and ROI perspective businesses can benefit by sensibly combining budgets to fund them – not just Learning & Development & HR, but CSR and Branding too. Berkshire Community Foundation have teamed with KliC4Training because their training goes well beyond a typical Team

Volunteering Day or Fundraising Day by being structured and development focused thereby giving measurable performance outcomes to participants.

Berkshire Community Foundation plans further initiatives to help businesses in its 25th year; the launch of [Localgiving.com/Berkshire](http://Localgiving.com/Berkshire) will enable companies to easily locate Foundation-vetted, local, voluntary groups and small charities for support and the launch of the Berkshire 100 club later this year will enable companies in the Berkshire area to work together to maximise their charitable giving and community involvement. **BV**

**If your company would like to give locally successfully, or would like to find out more about the services Berkshire Community Foundation offer, contact us on 0118 930 3021 or by email on [info@berkshirecf.org](mailto:info@berkshirecf.org).**