

## Local money for local people!

*"We have to have legitimate, legal software"* – David Bolam.



"The concept originally came from America," says David Bolam, explaining the idea behind the UK's Community Foundation network. "We try to grow the idea of charitable giving. We encourage people to donate, we invest that money, and then we make grants to local community organisations from the profits. Local money for local people!"



David is the Office Manager for the Berkshire Community Foundation, serving a county that – despite the wealthy stereotype – contains some of the most deprived wards in the UK. "We also manage funds that individuals and Corporates set up – we look after the paperwork and administration, and monitor the organisations that apply for money."

David rattles off some examples of grants that the organisation's recently made. A vital boat part for the Berkshire-wide charity that takes disabled people out on the river; a new specialised fire alarm system for the Reading Deaf Centre. "Scouts, Guides, Community Groups. Any charity in the county is eligible to apply, but we particularly try to reach the smaller groups who may not have the resources or know-how to access grants."

**Who are they?**  
THE BERKSHIRE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION.

With major limitations on its working budget, the Foundation aims to use IT very creatively to stretch this – notably Huddle, donated via the CTX scheme.

**Where are they?**  
Working across Berkshire; main office in Reading.

"We have two outreach workers," David explains. "Their job is to help the small organisations with applications, monitor the progress of the grants and connect with the community. With Huddle, we can get together with them virtually, using the whiteboard."

**What do they do?**  
Run a capital fund to provide grants for grassroots community projects.

"If we get them into the office, we have to pay their expenses. Put simply, this is more money taken away from grants. Online meetings allow these part-time staff to spend all that time meeting local people – not travelling in to see us."

**How big are they?**  
Six members of staff.

**What did they receive?**  
MS Office Professional, MapPoint & Project Professional; Symantec Norton AntiVirus 2008; Huddle 1-year Plus package.

David is also enthusiastic about MapPoint, which will fulfil a specific role for the Foundation. "Periodically, we produce a Community Needs Survey. Using MapPoint, we can identify those pockets of severe deprivation and focus on there. There's a lot of data out there, and other programs can do it – but not as well as MapPoint. Additionally, it's let us monitor the spread of Trustees across the county – to ensure that we truly represent our area."

**The outcome?**  
Virtual meetings for community outreach workers; resources concentrated on areas where most needed.

The CTX scheme has been a lifeline for the Foundation. "We heard about it on the grapevine and thought: 'this sounds wonderful!'" David recalls. "We've recently received a grant ourselves – to upgrade our IT – but this only covered the hardware. And as a registered charity we have to have legitimate, legal software – I'm managing a business here."

[berkshirecommunityfoundation.org.uk](http://berkshirecommunityfoundation.org.uk)

"Our immediate priority was to upgrade Office – we were struggling along, but needed Outlook and proper Antivirus software. So that was the first donation request that we made," he says.

"That would have cost over a thousand pounds alone – we wouldn't have been able to pay that sort of sum – we just wouldn't," he concludes. "We'd have struggled on without the CTX donations – but we'd have been far less efficient."