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Charities & Volunteering

- News
- Charity Of The Month
- Volunteering
- Charities & Organisations

You are here: [Home](#) [Charities & Volunteering](#) [Charities & Organisations](#) [FreshTies update - putting "community" back into society](#)

FreshTies update - putting "community" back into society

By Ashish Poddar - 17/12/2006

Following the last article, I have had great responses from Mature Times readers, and am really grateful for these. They've influenced FreshTies policy, offered help with raising funds, ideas for the website to words of support in what I'm trying to achieve.

And best of all, as I always had in mind, it is already about people shaping how FreshTies moves forwards.

FreshTies is a social enterprise, which means its profits must be used to benefit the community. These profits are generated by membership fees to join the website.

Prior to the article, members joining the website would select a project that 50% of their membership fee would support. One reader offered me his considerable experience of business and setting up local organisations to benefit the community. He pointed out that listing charitable projects might cause practical difficulties. For example, how to ensure there are sufficient projects to satisfy the range of member preferences, would they be large or smaller charities or community based projects? Moreover, the choices were coming from FreshTies rather than the members.

Following several phone conversations with him, FreshTies policy has changed. Contributing to listed community projects is replaced by membership fees contributing towards a fund for the area in which the members live, ensuring that local people and not bureaucrats decide how the money is used.

Another reader owns a villa abroad. To help where banks won't, he offered some of the rent during part of the year! Many readers have mentioned that they would like to share their experiences of life, whether as part of career and work, education or life in general for the benefit of other members. The great benefit is that it helps the younger generation of members at FreshTies as well as for networking within the same age group ie 50 plus.

Moving forwards

FreshTies needs to devise a model structure for the local funds that membership fees shall contribute to. The contribution of expertise and ideas from readers would be invaluable. On the website there is a web link with information about what we are doing and ideas so far. Readers, when they login to [www.freshties.com](#), can add their comments to existing discussions or in their own page.

Another contribution that would help the younger generation is for readers to highlight their career, study, life experiences, so others can benefit from these- all part of 'people-helping-people' culture at FreshTies. Moreover, readers can network amongst themselves by finding things in common.

Privacy is respected as we ask that members join with an anonymous user name, email addresses are never disclosed to other members, and FreshTies does not sell any information to third parties.

In return, FreshTies is offering readers a limited number of free memberships. Readers should get in touch with Ashish Poddar at ash@freshties.com or on 07845 574 453.

Fresh Ties testimonials

"If FreshTies can dispel ignorance, deepen understanding and promote respect for one another by all its users, it will prove that the internet, properly used, can be a Godsend."

The Most Revd & Rt Hon Dr John Sentamu, Archbishop of York.

FreshTies.com is able to offer a lot of support and a platform for sharing ideas for business, communities and individuals through to the hundreds of thousands of voluntary organizations delivering quality services in local communities. This is a good example of technology being used in a positive way to provide support and services at the heart of the community."

Rt Hon Gordon Brown, MP, Chancellor of the Exchequer

"FreshTies.com is an exciting site. FreshTies 'people-helping-people' culture matches up the needs which exist with the talents and experience everybody has to offer. We all have a shared responsibility for our shared future - individuals, families, government, business and voluntary organizations all have a vital role to play. By enabling people and organizations to network online, FreshTies.com is a great resource to help everyone help others."

Rt Hon David Cameron MP, Leader of HM Opposition

"I am delighted to lend my support to FreshTies. This is an innovative idea and one that will be of benefit to a great number of people. The efforts of Ashish Poddar are to be applauded."

Sir Menzies Campbell, QC MP.

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