

physical renaissance, a lot of the Government funding that helped some local new businesses pay for Trevett's services is coming to an end. He thinks Peter Durrant has helped put in place the practices that will allow his business to function effectively in the long term.

Both men are keen on the idea of work which, as Trevett describes it, 'puts something back', and believe the communitarian nature of the project gives people access to useful information and skills which might otherwise be hard to unearth, or which they might not have thought about.

Durrant credits FreshTies with providing something which is socially useful, and on a personal, human level, a medium to find new, productive relationships with people. 'Being retired is a difficult business', he says. 'One's support network disappears overnight.'

For details of FreshTies go to [www.freshties.com](http://www.freshties.com)

*Written by Martin Gurdon*

# Fresh ties

Having skills but nowhere to use them can be one of the frustrations of retirement, but a new organisation called FreshTies has found a way of putting them to good use, as part of a broader, web-based information exchange

The brainchild of Ashish Poddar, a former city lawyer who came up with the idea of building community relations using information technology, FreshTies is a not-for-profit scheme (that is; when money is made it gets re-invested in local projects, businesses and charities), with a one off, £7.50 joining fee for individuals – half of which is re-invested in local schemes, the other half used to grow the site.

It now has some 10,000 members, and has proved to be a good method of providing mentoring services, where, amongst other things, older people offer their hard-won knowledge to others, even if they don't meet face to face. Peter Durrant and Matthew Trevett are good examples of this.

Cambridge-based Durrant, 70, was a community development worker, whilst Trevett runs a marketing and public relations agency in Cardiff, which he started in 2002, and now has a mix of clients ranging from small breweries to the Royal Mint.

The pair were unlikely to run into each other in the pub, nor would the usefulness of the older man's skills to a PR agency be immediately apparent, but Trevett insists they've been a big help, as the amount of work that goes into keeping a business going often means that little time is spent in finding ways to improve it. 'It's a bit like the old adage that if you want to see a house in various states of disrepair, visit a builder,' he says.

Durrant's motivation is simple. 'I'm very interested in networking theory and practice, and over the years I helped start a lot of social enterprises. Consciously swapping information builds on that concept,' he says, adding that he was often advising on nuts and bolts elements such as cash flow management and business start ups.

He got Matthew Trevett, to look again at the skills of his staff (eight, with a 50/50 split between full and part time workers), so that they could contribute to looking after and administrating work for newly won accounts.

Trevett suggests that winning new business is often easier than sustaining long term relationships, and although Cardiff has enjoyed a cultural and