

Community action website calls on charities to inform grant making

By Paul Jump, Third Sector Online, 29 May 2007

A social enterprise that hopes to pump millions of pounds into community projects next year is asking charities how its grant-making process should be structured.

Fresh Ties runs a social networking website that allows individuals to share skills and views and gives charities the chance to promote issues and campaigns.

The Community Interest Company aims to plough 50 per cent of its membership fees back into donors' own communities, and possibly set up a national fund with what remains of the rest.

Fresh Ties' founder Ashish Poddar said that, based on feedback he had received, he hoped to return "six-figures sums" to each local authority area within six months of launching the grants scheme in July.

Initial plans include asking local agents to draw up shortlists of worthy projects fortnightly, on which members could then vote online. Poddar expected projects nominated to be those needing less than £1000. However, Fresh Ties is keen to hear charities' views.

"The key to our success will be transparency," he said. "Everyone needs to be able to see exactly where all the money goes."

Charities can comment on the plans by taking part in the online [consultation](#).

Fresh Ties has also set up a collaboration with Age Concern whereby 50 per cent of the membership fees from people who join the network via a special webpage goes directly to the charity. Poddar said he hoped to set up similar arrangements with many other charities.