

Often it is frustrating, even heart breaking, when I know of good projects or causes that cannot access standard grants or funding pots to help finance them. You can see the ambition but without the money they are unachievable.

Thankfully there are alternative ways of seeking support, such as crowdfunding or accessing corporate community programmes. If you are a small charity or organisation the latter is a great way to seek support. Many banks and building societies have community funds that their staff can nominate projects for, and I have seen some great examples of this such as music therapy for those with dementia or kit for a sports club.

Other businesses have funding pots which allow people to vote for their favourite. One that is live this very moment is the Aviva Community Fund and has projects in Larkfield, Ditton and Blue Bell Hill that need your support. All three are extremely worthy initiatives that are not able to get funding from other means but will help improve their local community enormously. But in order to get their funding they have to win through the public vote so please do go online and put into google Aviva Community Fund, search for our area and vote for the schemes. With ten votes each, it is the Christmas of democracy!

Actually I think this is a good way for organisations to secure additional funding because it makes people think creatively and encourages proper business planning in the process. It is important that funding, which we know is sparse, is used correctly and so the more due diligence that can be done the better. In the meantime, businesses can feel good about supporting community projects most in need. So please get voting. It is an election without leaflets and door knocking but with an outcome that you can feel good about!