



# What is Community Consultation?

We expect Community Fund applicants to provide evidence that they have consulted the local community about their project proposals. We need to see and be convinced that the community is fully behind the projects or programmes being developed, and that opportunities to take part are open to all.

**Any funding application for a project or development of group is stronger if your community has been involved in the development, design and planning of the project from the start.**

## What does 'community' mean?

Community does not necessarily mean the whole geographical community in which you are based (although it might). It could mean a group of people who are the intended beneficiaries – e.g. young people under the age of 18, men over 60.

It's important to remember that it is sometimes useful to extend what *you* think of as 'community'. For example:

- If you are members of an art group, you may need to contact people beyond the existing membership, to ensure that others can give their views on what's proposed and have the opportunity to join in.
- If you have a group of young people coming along to a youth club, involving them in consultation may not be enough. It may be that consultation is the perfect opportunity to undertake outreach work to identify potential new beneficiaries. Local young people who aren't currently members may have new ideas that would result in increased membership.

## Involving your community?

There are lots of ways to get your community involved in your project – you need to find the ways that work best for your project and the people you want to talk to. The process needs to be interesting and engaging! Some groups send out questionnaires, others run fun days or focus groups. If you want to make improvements to your village you could set up a stall in the town centre and ask people to share their ideas that way. If you have a group of vulnerable people, perhaps have informal conversations instead – you could include the family or carers in the conversation too. Having a coffee, cake and chat event might bring people in - the important thing is to get people involved in a way that means you hear them.

## The importance of meaningful and open consultation

When you kick-off a consultation, questions need to be genuinely open and not 'leading'. Asking 40 people 'would you like a swimming pool in your local park?' is NOT meaningful and open consultation. Neither is asking a group of young people 'would you like 10 new computers?' You need to ask people freely for their ideas and thoughts and welcome all contributions. An example of open questions might be 'What are the best things about this community? What would make it even better?' or 'What activities and events would you like to see happening here?'

## After the consultation

When you have gathered community thoughts and ideas, you'll need to consider how these fit with aims of your group and with the community as a whole. Might you be duplicating something already taking place? Or could your new idea complement an activity already in place? Only wider investigation and scoping will enable you to start planning in earnest. And your community engagement work doesn't end there – you are in it for the long-term, checking back and bringing people along with you.

***NB: compliance with this guidance note does not guarantee that an application will be successful – it gives an indication of some elements of our assessment process and criteria.***

## Useful Information, Tips, Guidance

- [Involving Your Community](#), Development Trusts Association Scotland
- [Easy Consultation Toolkit](#), Shared Care Scotland
- [Creative Community Consultation](#), Case Studies