

HOW TO USE THIS TOOLKIT

WELCOME TO YOUR TOOLKIT.

You've been sent this booklet because you and your group are doing extraordinary things in your local area and making where you live even better.

At Forever Manchester we're here to help groups just like yours to connect with people and build some community spirit.

We believe that the best people to make a change to where they live are the people who live and work there and the groups they are part of, over the years we've helped and worked with 1000's of community groups to do just that. We've also had Community Builders in some neighbourhoods working with residents and trying out some different techniques to discover hidden talents and new ideas for community activity. We've learnt that you can't know what a community wants until you know what it already has and that by exploring the existing groups, buildings, spaces and people, you can uncover a wealth of hidden gems that can be connected to achieve extraordinary things together.

This toolkit is a collection of some techniques we've learnt that can help increase participation, discover new project ideas and forge even more connections between people where you live. As these tools have been learnt from the community, you may already use some of them in what you do, others may be a twist on something you've tried and some will be completely new. All the tools are worth trying and as we go through we'll explain the benefits we've seen of carrying out each one and what you can expect to see happen as a result of using them. You can follow each step in order or pick and choose tools that you like the look of. Also feel free to adapt and change any to suit you, your group and your community.

We'd love to hear from you if you use these tools or find new ways of using them or have any other ideas! By sharing these tools and the stories from communities we hope to help more people to do extraordinary things together.





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FINDING THE THINGS

THERE ARE LOTS OF GREAT THINGS HAPPENING IN COMMUNITIES ALL THE TIME THAT PEOPLE WANT TO KNOW ABOUT AND BE PART OF, BUT SOMETIMES IT CAN BE DIFFICULT FOR PEOPLE TO FIND OUT WHAT'S HAPPENING AND WHERE.

"There's nothing to do round 'ere" is a phrase often heard in a local community and for those of us running community projects we know that this isn't true.

We also know that when groups like yours work with other groups and individuals on projects, everyone involved sees massive benefits from collective efforts, so knowing about other groups and their activities is also useful for groups as well as individuals.

Another challenge faced by people wanting to do good in their local community is the perceived obstacles in the way of turning their idea into reality. "We need a venue, we need equipment and materials, we need money, and we need people who can help us deliver it." What if there was something that could help people find out what is already available locally. Your community is rich with hidden assets. It's just a case of unearthing them.

The following is an exercise which uses local knowledge to build a physical map of the local

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

- Local people (3-10 is a good number).
- A large map of your neighbourhood ask a local councillor or housing trust who'll usually have one. Failing that Google Maps is good (other online maps are available).
- 3 different colour sticky dots (or whatever shape you like. We like blue, red and yellow.
- A table to record your findings (see Figure 1).
- A pen.

INSTRUCTIONS

- Lay your map out on a large table and gather everyone around.
- 2. Take your first coloured dots (we use blue) and number 5 of them 1 to 5.
- Start to identify all the institutions and service providers in the area. Institutions are things such as the police, the council, schools, jobcentres and any public service where people are paid to deliver projects.
- 4. When you have identified your first one, stick the dot numbered 1 on the map where that institution is.
- 5. Complete the first box of your table with the sticker number and colour.
- 6. In the "What is it?" box, write what the dot is marking e.g. school, police, and housing association etc.

- 7. In the third box, write any details about that institution i.e. what do they do? What could they do to help? How do they benefit the community? Plus any other information you think is relevant.
- 8. The fourth box is the contact details for the institution if you have them.
- Continue to do this until you think you have found all the institutions in the neighbourhood. If you need to number more dots just keep adding numbers to that colour.
- 10. Next follow the steps above using different colour dots to identify the local voluntary and community groups and where they are. REMEMBER you can put more than one dot on the same place, for example, if there are a number of groups in one community centre put a different

- dot on the map for each group.
- 11. Next follow the steps above using different colour dots and identify the physical spaces or buildings. Remember that you could put more than one dot on the same place. For example a school is an institution, it may have a PTA which is a group and it's also a building that may be available for use by the community.
- 12. With buildings think about if they have rooms. Is there a big kitchen? Can land be used for another purpose e.g. could some waste land be used to grow vegetables?
- 13. Once you've run out of ideas, you're done with the map for today but remember it's useful to show it to as many people as possible and get their input.

area. This can be used to highlight the wealth of activities that happen in the community and lets people know where and who to go to for help with projects and ideas. We all know that local people know more about what is going on than anyone else, so try to do this activity with as many people as possible, in your group, with other groups and with friends and family. Kids especially like this game.

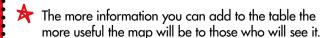
Once the map is up it can be used to celebrate the work of everyone in the community, promote groups and help people find activities to get involved with as well as help people with new ideas possibly find a room/space and other people to do their project.

Market number	What is it?	Assets/Description	Contact details
Blue 1	Police	Community Safety Have a Community Liason Will attend Community events Advice	PC Plod 999
Green 1	Community Centre	Ran by local housing group Have rooms for community to use Disabled access Home to many groups	Kay Holder 0616 213 7665
Red 1	Knit Happens	Local knitting group Jumpers for sale and donation Large attendence Make great cakes	Pearl Stitch 0121 465 2364

Figure 1







Make the map public e.g. put it on a wall in a busy place.

Regularly get the map out and add any new groups to it as well as taking old ones off.

Anything could be useful and interesting, it's the perception that matters...a piece of wasteland is a waste until someone imagines a community allotment or playground!

If you know someone who is good with computers maybe make a Google Map that can be shared online.

HOW IT HELPS



Imagine if someone new moves to your area and wants to know what groups happen locally? The map is a great way for them to find out what's going on and where.

IT ALSO ALLOWS THE COMMUNITY TO SEE IF THERE ARE ANY SIMILAR GROUPS WHO COULD WORK TOGETHER ON BIGGER PROJECTS OR IF SOMEONE HAS A NEW IDEA.

The map allows us to identify any available rooms that could be used or if there is already that type of activity in the area.

WE'VE DONE THIS ACTIVITY AT NUMEROUS FUN DAYS

People are always surprised and interested to discover just how much is going on where they live, meaning lots of people have found new things to get involved with.



FINDING THE PEOPLE

THE MOST IMPORTANT THING IN BUILDING A STRONGER, MORE CONNECTED COMMUNITY ARE THE PEOPLE THAT LIVE THERE.

We know that most groups want to increase their membership and attendance at events and projects, because we all know that the more people who are involved, the more we can achieve. If you've already done the previous mapping exercise, by finding more people you're starting to build up an even more detailed understanding of what skills and other resources are available in the local community.

The best way to find out about people is to have a conversation with them, so you can learn about them and they can learn about you. In this section we are going to look at making the most of conversations that you're probably already having with other members of the community and where to go to have more of them. As we've said before, the more you know about who is available to help and how, the more you can achieve as a community. It's also another opportunity to promote your groups' upcoming events and activities, it also costs a lot less than posters and flyers, which may not be as effective as good old word of mouth recommendations. People are more likely to come to something they've had recommended

to them than something they have seen on a poster and may have no connection to.

If you're not doing it already, it would be good to encourage all members of your group and other groups to be having conversations wherever they are in the community; down at the local shops, on the school playground, in the park or down the pub. You know your community the best so you already know which places would be best for you and your team to go and investigate.

When you're having conversations and finding out about new people remember that positive questions usually get positive answers. Try to concentrate on asking questions that focus on the possibilities and the good things in the community and each other. Also, you're trying to get as many people involved as possible, so ask questions about what can be done together not what the person wants you to do for them.

We know that some people won't be comfortable doing this!

Honestly, we've been told numerous times that this wouldn't work, but our experience has always shown this to be a great way to meet people and get them involved. **Have faith**.





What do you like to do in your spare time? That's really useful; do you want to help us out?

Do you like it around here?

Do you know about this project?
Do you think you could help?
Do you want to come?

What do you think needs to happen around here and what could we do together to make it happen?



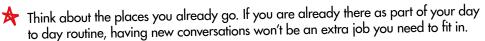
WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

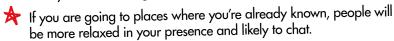
- A friend to go with you (it helps with confidence).
- ✓ Your questions you may want to design a quick form so you can record the answers from people.
- A plan of where to go.

INSTRUCTIONS

- 1. Go to the places where you know people will be.
- 2. Ask people the questions you've come up with.
- 3. Yeah, it's not a difficult one this.







Ask other people if they know anywhere that would be good.

Think about places indoors for when the weather is bad or it's the winter.

Think about what time of day would be best to go to that place. A school at home time can be better than a school at dropping off time, because parents tend to arrive early and have to wait around for the final bell.

Don't forget to get contact details for anyone you've met so you can get hold of them again.

Try and follow up with anyone that you meet who is interested and can help you out, but don't leave it too long.

A Stay positive.

Compliment people on their skills and let them know how useful they are.

Practice makes perfect.

Ask permission to be at some of the places you'll be having conversations e.g. schools and shops etc.

Try and keep a record of the skills and ideas of people you meet, as they may be useful in the future.



FINDING THE SKILLS

IN THIS SECTION WE WANT TO SHARE WITH YOU ONE OF OUR FAVOURITE GAMES FROM **OUR COMMUNITY BUILDING WORK: IT'S** CALLED HEAD, HEART AND HANDS.

We've played this game at events where we invited members of the community and groups to come and learn about each other and explore new project ideas. We've always had great success in matching people with similar skills, who might not have known each other, around their shared skills and knowledge.

This game is a great way to make the skills and knowledge of people visible to others who might benefit from a helping hand or some expertise. You can also play this game at group meetings to discover other skills of members that you may not know about. You can try it on a grand scale at community fun days where the whole community can share and appreciate what each other are good at! People can use the information to connect with new friends based on shared interests. Whatever the goal, by the end of the game you will have uncovered and made visible loads of information about the people in your community to add to the information from the previous 2 exercises.

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

People.

✓ Blu Tac.

✓ Lots of Post-it notes.

3 large pieces of paper. A wall.

Some pens.



INSTRUCTIONS

- Take the 3 pieces of paper and write 'Head' on one, 'Heart' on another and 'Hands' on the last.
- Put the paper up on the wall next to each other.
- Each person playing should now take 3 Post-it notes and write their name on them.
- 4. On each of those Post-its they should now write one thing they know a lot about or something they could talk confidently and at length about... these are called assets of the head, e.g. I know a lot about different types of food, I know a lot about history, I know a lot about major soap opera plot lines from the 1980's.
- When each person has 3 completed Post-it notes they then stick them on the piece of paper that says 'Head'.

- 6. Each person should take 3 more Post-it notes and write their name on again.
- 7. On each of those Post-its they should write one thing they care a lot about, something they are passionate about... these are called assets of the heart e.g. I care about my family, I care about the environment, I am passionate about music.
- When each person has 3 completed Post-it notes they then stick them on the piece of paper that says 'Heart'.
- Each person should take 3 more Post-it notes and write their name on again.
- 10. On each of those Post-its they should write one thing they can do with their hands or an activity they can carry out... these are called assets of the hands, e.g.

- I can make jam, I can catch fish, I can play the oboe.
- When each person has 3 completed Post-it notes they then stick them on the piece of paper that says 'Hands'.
- At the end of the session encourage everybody to get up and have a look at all the skills on the boards.
- 13. If someone has an idea they can use the Post-its to find people with skills they need to help make the project a reality.
- People with similar skills and interests might want to talk about them together.
- 15. There may be people who all share a skill or interest and might want to get together and start a new project or offer something new to an existing one.

HOW IT HELPS

If you've been following the steps in this tool kit you'll notice that your starting to build up your knowledge of lots of useful skills, services, groups and spaces, which you can use to help you in your community work.

IF YOU NOW BEGIN TO LINK THESE THINGS UP A WHOLE WORLD OF POSSIBILITIES OPENS UP.

IN OUR WORK WE WOULD WORK WITH GROUPS AND PLAY
THE HEAD, HEART AND HANDS GAME. ONCE WE'D FOUND
PEOPLE IN THE ROOM WITH SIMILAR INTERESTS AND IDEAS WE
WOULD START TO LOOK AT WHO WE HAD HAD CONVERSATIONS
WITH AND HOW THEY MIGHT BE ABLE TO HELP.

We would then use our **map** to identify if any groups in the area did a similar activity or if they could help. We also thought about what institutions might be able to contribute. Once we'd got an idea and people who wanted to get involved we used our map to identify possible places in the community to carry out the project.

By working like this we realised that you can achieve loads with the resources already available in the local area and that, by bringing people and groups together,

THIS CREATED LOTS OF POSITIVE ACTION.





- Make sure people put their name onto their Post-its.
- Make sure you introduce people with similar skills and interests.
- Keep a record of the skills found for any future projects.
- Keep on the lookout for possible new ideas and projects.
- Use volunteers in the group to match similar skills.



CONNECTING

BRINGING PEOPLE TOGETHER TO SHARE AND GET TO KNOW EACH OTHER IS ONE OF THE THINGS THAT MAKES BEING INVOLVED IN EFFORTS TO BUILD COMMUNITY SPIRIT SO ENJOYABLE.

In previous sections we've seen some different techniques that can be used to discover more of the great things and people in our communities. By making every effort to connect up the things we find we make all the hard work worthwhile.

You may already host things like coffee mornings or play-groups which are great places to introduce people to each other. Imagine being out having conversations with people and then being able to introduce them to each other because of their common interests and starting a new friendship. So why not invite groups of individuals with similar skills and passions to come and have a coffee together and get to know each other, when we had these gettogethers they always resulted in some great positive conversation and new project ideas.

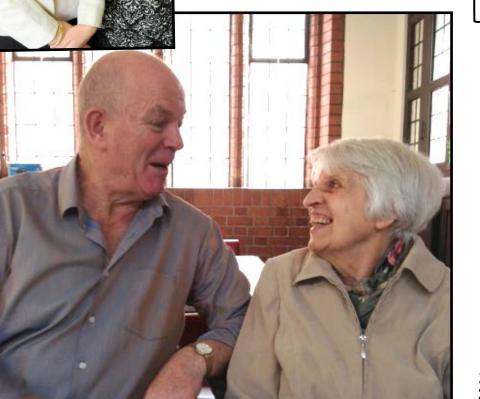
Connecting can also be done between groups, by using events such as community fun days



or even clean ups. In one area a local litter picking group regularly get areas of the community clean and tidy before big events and street parties which helps everyone, spreads the word, and in return they get party invites and are treated as special guests. The more connections in a community, the more possibilities become available to us.

WHY HAVE A MEETING WHEN YOU CAN HAVE A PARTY?

One thing we have learnt over time is that many people in communities just don't like the thought of meetings and even if it was something they may be interested in, the idea of a meeting puts them off. Who can blame them, meetings are boring! We found in all communities that you can achieve everything you would want to achieve in a meeting in a much more informal setting and were amazed how many more people came when we called it a party. Parties and events are naturally places where people connect and chat, so if you are thinking of bringing people together or inviting them to get involved, try and make it fun and interesting.





Flatter people, telling someone they are useful for what you want to do will really get them engaged.

Keep a record of all the skills and passions you find as you never know when they'll come in handy.

GREATING & SUSTAINING YOUR PROJECT

AS WE'VE SEEN IN PREVIOUS SECTIONS. THERE ARE ALREADY A WEALTH OF POTENTIALLY **UNTAPPED RESOURCES AVAILABLE IN** THE COMMUNITY. BY BRINGING THEM TOGETHER WE CAN INCREASE THE IMPACT OF OUR IDEAS AND PROJECTS AS WELL AS CREATING NEW AND EXCITING ONES.

Another result is that it might reduce the need for external funding or make funding go even further, e.g. you might have met people happy to lend you some equipment for a gardening project, or found a room you can use for free, all the time increasing the number of people involved and the sense of community around the idea. You might also discover new activities that you want to get involved with through learning a new skill or giving new people the benefit of yours.

One project we came across wanted to make mosaics with children at a play group. They could have asked for funding and had to

wait weeks for it to come through. Instead they took to social media and asked people if they had old tiles they didn't need. Within 3 days they had more tiles than they knew what to do with, without spending a penny. They also managed to get more people involved and excited about the upcoming project.

Sometimes there are things that, no matter how hard you look, you can't find in the local community and that's where you'll need a little financial help. At Forever Manchester we've got a range of funds available for you to apply for. We suggest that groups use funding to start new ideas and grow. If you rely on funding for general running costs, it can get quite stressful every year making applications and hoping that you get the award, so here are some ideas for activities that you can do that will get people involved as well as raising some funds to keep your group going.



FUN DAYS

Fun days are a great way for you to get people together, have fun and raise funds. Have collection buckets as well as raffles, competitions and anything else you can think of.

Ask members to pay a regular fee. The more members you have the more money you can raise, even if it's just in 20p or 50p donations.

USE YOUR IMAGINATIONSponsored tots walks, car washing, water balloon stocks and plenty of other things have been done to raise money.

If by looking around the community you find some expertise that you do need to pay for, it's better for the community to pay the local person as they'll spend the money locally and the money stays in local circulation.



Lots of groups apply to us for funding to run and hold events which then raise money for another charity. Although it is admirable and the charity will be thankful for it, why not first think about keeping raised funds for your group to keep running activities. That way another group could apply for that funding therefore spreading the good work and making our money go further.



Did you know Forever Manchester is a charity? If you do want to donate why not donate to us so we can continue to support you and people like you in your community for years to come.



COMMUNITY STORIES ARE KEY TO INSPIRING PEOPLE TO GET INVOLVED IN WHERE THEY LIVE AND TO FEEL PART OF WHAT'S GOING ON LOCALLY.

You'll probably already have lots from the work you and your group have done. A good success story about local people coming together will inspire others and show them that they can make a difference to where they live. Stories from times in the past when people took action can provide a blueprint for how to make something similar happen again, as well as bringing the community together around their shared history.

There isn't a hard and fast way to collect stories, and everyone has their own personal take on what happened and what the impact was. Our best advice is to practice telling your stories to people that you meet, whenever you can, to see if the stories can spark an idea or interest, e.g when having conversations or at fun days. Become confident in telling those stories and proud of what your group has achieved, it's not boasting, it's inspiring.

To discover more stories, why not ask people questions such as "When did the community

come together to do something good?" or "How did the community do that?" Both of these questions are great ways to start conversations and identify great ideas from the past.

Another good idea is to have a space to share stories that emerge in the community. You may already have Newsletters and Social Media sites which are great ways to do this, by asking questions online and asking people to share photos etc.

An example of a community sharing stories happened one particularly bad winter.

As people realised they were trapped in their drives, neighbours began to talk about times gone by when everyone would help each other to clear the snow. From this story some neighbours said they'd share their tools and others offered their labour, and between the whole street they began to clear the drives. Inspired by this and further conversations the street now has a regular newsletter to share stories and new ideas for activity that people can get involved with.





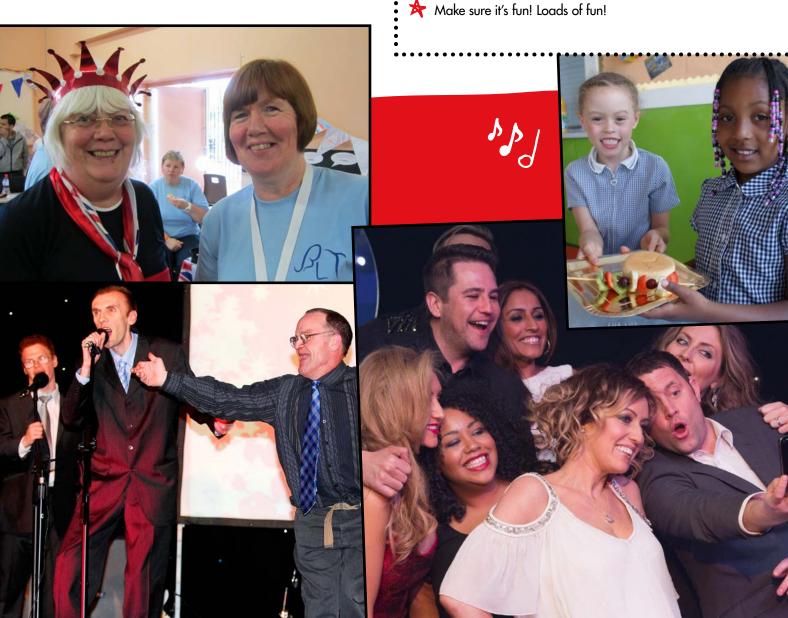
CELEBRATIONS

EVERYONE LOVES A GOOD PARTY AND THE BEST WAY TO SHOW PEOPLE WHAT YOU'VE ACHIEVED AS A COMMUNITY IS TO THROW A BASH WHERE EVERYONE'S INVITED! CELEBRATION EVENTS GIVE YOU THE OPPORTUNITY TO TELL YOUR SUCCESS STORIES, MEET OTHERS AND HEAR THEIR STORIES AND TO INSPIRE NEW FOLKS TO GET INVOLVED IN THE FUTURE!

We're not going to tell you how to throw a party, or what you should do to celebrate because there's no recipe for fun (in fact sometimes the less organisation the better). Here's some top tips from our experience...



- Invite people from as many community groups and projects as you can, to come and share their stories too.
- Invite as many people as you can who aren't involved in any group or project, to have a good time and learn about what's been happening in the community.
- Y Use it as a chance to learn about any new people and groups.
- Use it as a chance to come up with ideas for the future to continue your great work.
- Use local talents to provide entertainment e.g. singers, DJs, dance groups etc.
- Maybe use it as a chance to raise funds for future projects.



CHECKLIST

BEFORE YOU GET OUT THERE AND GET TO KNOW YOUR COMMUNITY, IT CAN BE GOOD TO MAKE SURE THAT YOU HAVE EVERYTHING THAT YOU ARE GOING TO NEED.

Whether you want to take each stage step by step, or pick and choose the stages that suit you, below is a checklist to help you make the most of these tools:

- → Have your map clearly set out the more space you allow for detail the more you can get out of the map and see the possibilities of the physical space in your neighbourhood.
- Choose places you might naturally talk to people for your conversations – if it's raining why not try a cafe, or if it's beautiful sunshine try the park.
- Plan your questions and conversation points, and remember to get a few compliments in too it's always great to let someone know how useful they can be.
- Have a sheet to take down people's details and skills so you can get hold of them again.

- Use games to get people relaxed and positive – Head, Hearts and Hands brings peoples skills out and lets you see who has similar talents and interests.
- Connecting is the key to success connect as much as you can, people, skills and ideas. There really is no limit!
- Share stories and celebrate. Stories really do inspire and empower people share your own and share other peoples. And there is no better place to share stories and ideas than a party!

Most projects and great ideas will need a little extra financial help to get them off the ground. As a funder, we know some of the things that groups need to have at hand to help with funding applications:

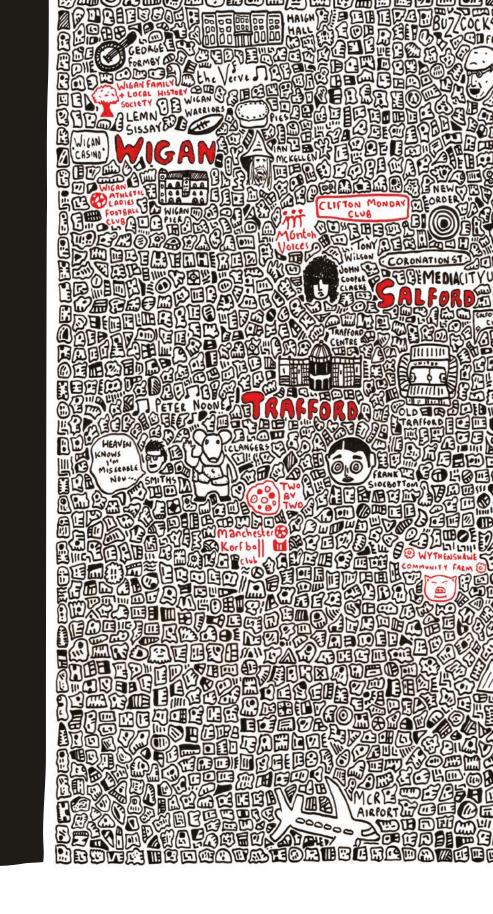


- Governing Document: have a document that is up-to-date and signed by the committee. This should include the aims of your organisation, details on AGM's and quorums, and say what will happen to any funds/assets if the group fold.
- Safeguarding policies: if your group work with Under 18's or Vulnerable Adults, you need tomake sure your policies are available for the funder to see.
- Annual accounts: whether you are a small group who simply write down their incomings and outgoings on a word document, or a larger group who have audited accounts, funders will often need to see the most recent accounts.
- Project: have a clear project idea and know exactly what you want from the funding. This will help show your passion and the strength of the project.

- Do not quote government statistics: funders want to know about you and your community.
- Application: remember to sign and date the application (a simple one but it's easy to miss!) and keep a copy for your records.
- Tell stories: as funders, we want to know the stories of the people your group work with, and the volunteers too! It's great to hear of the positive difference a group has made to its community.
- Your voice: whilst you might want someone to help you with your application, make sure what you write down still comes from you. If it's not your voice it doesn't tell your story.



CHARITY... THE MANGUNIAN WAY





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