



FUNDING REQUEST TO IVYBRIDGE TOWN COUNCIL FOR 2024/25

Currently, our Community Connector has undertaken work in Ivybridge for several years. However, it is increasingly challenging to obtain funding for this role and we can only do so if the role's remit changes extensively. We have funding for the current Community Connector role until June 2024.

We wish to continue to support Ivybridge Town Council and your residents/groups, through a variety of other roles.

In addition to our fundraising support and communications/volunteer recruitment support, the following roles will have a geographic remit focused on Ivybridge and nearby parishes:

Community Builder*: The Community Builder will have a geographic remit for the area covering Ivybridge and nearby parishes. This role will be one of three for South Hams, rather than our current one position for the whole of South Hams. The aim of this role is to support groups to find funding**, volunteer recruitment, capacity building and providing training, information and advice, and to support the Caring Alliance.

The Community Builders will also have 'champion' remits around dementia, carer support and reducing social isolation. The latter includes young people and mental health.

Community Link Worker: The Community Link Worker is a new role. Currently, this role will have a geographic remit for the area covering Ivybridge, Kingsbridge and nearby parishes. However, as we increase the number of Community Link Workers, we will move the Kingsbridge area into another role's remit.

The aim of the Community Link Worker role is to provide one-to-one support to residents (similar to social prescribers but with key differences). The role will act as a resident's buddy, integrating socially isolated residents into activities in the first instance. It will also create buddy networks within local organisations. The role will also provide IT training (including social media) and develop a peer-support network for socially isolated residents.

We have recently recruited to this role and the postholder is starting shortly.

**We have a Community Development Worker but we are currently seeking funding for three Community Builders.*

***We have recently recruited a fundraising position. The postholder can offer advice and training to groups.*

Further to the above roles, we are currently seeking funding for the following role which will be a

huge benefit to local voluntary and community groups:

Volunteer recruitment coordinator: In a survey undertaken by South Hams Community Action (formerly South Hams CVS) in May 2023, many of our VCSE organisations raised concerns about volunteer recruitment, particularly post-Covid. One community transport charity noted that their volunteer drivers had dropped from 22 to 10 since Covid.

Organisations are reporting that it is relatively easy to find volunteers for short-term or ad-hoc projects such as May Fayres, clean-up events, etc. However, even organisations with a current, healthy number of volunteers are concerned about sustainability. Primary areas of concern in the survey are volunteer recruitment for befrienders, support for carers (sitting services) and community transport.

There is a lot of negativity around the potential for volunteer recruitment in these areas, but just one article that we wrote for the Imag (Ivybridge magazine) received four enquiries with two community transport drivers signing up to Ivybridge & District Community Transport Association (IDCTA).

In a nearby area, one of our social prescribers worked with a socially isolated client (which led to depression and ill health) who had moved to the area a few years previously. The social prescriber encouraged her client to consider volunteering and we connected her to a local warm hub. That client is now in charge of what is now a community hub, open several days a week.

Also, we need to work with organisations of all types to widen their volunteer remit and to be supported to do so, eg. in Ivybridge, adults with learning disabilities who used to attend the now-disbanded Stairways project will be actively supported with volunteering opportunities through your new food hub project.

We would like to do more to support your organisations with their volunteer recruitment and communications needs. This role will actively enable residents to understand the real value and benefit to be found with volunteering.

IVYBRIDGE SUPPORT

In terms of supporting Ivybridge as the Community Connector funding comes to an end, we will allocate team resources to continue to build upon the work undertaken. There will be one-to-one support for residents via our Community Link Worker including an ongoing peer-support network. In addition, there will be more support, training and advice for your voluntary and community groups – with a holistic approach to meet their wide-ranging needs.

Over the years we have developed strong networks in Ivybridge and we will continue to support these groups. Our additional capacity will prove to be a real benefit to Ivybridge groups. Already we have created other opportunities for groups with an additional district-wide caring conference to enhance the learning/networking opportunities for the Erme & Yealm Caring Alliance membership and other organisations. We have just held a Funding Day to enable groups to meet the National Lottery team and a range of local funders. We are also holding a volunteer recruitment event in the Spring to support organisations by connecting them with information and advice on what has worked well in other areas.

We will also do more to promote our services – *and those of the voluntary sector* – more widely. Already we have supported Ivybridge groups with articles in the imag, social media and posters.

With an increased capacity we will be able to offer a greater range of services and communicate this more widely.

We are asking for funding towards the work we will undertake during the financial year 2024/25. Ivybridge Town Council has previously supported the Community Connector role with £2,000 each year. We are writing to request that this support continues – to enable us to develop further roles with a wider range of support, advice and training for your voluntary and community groups, and one-to-one support for your residents.

We can provide an evaluation report based on the number of Ivybridge groups actively supported either on a one-to-one basis or via training, workshops or support events by our Community Builder and also our Volunteer Recruitment and Fundraising roles. We can also provide information on the number of individual residents supported by our Community Link Worker. In addition to quantitative information, we can provide qualitative information in the form of case studies, etc.