

## Charity Funding Scheme Unveiled

The new Southampton Business Grassroots Community Fund has just been launched at the New Forest's Balmer Lawn Hotel to a packed room of Southampton and Fareham Chamber of Commerce members who were attending a networking lunch at the venue.

The Chamber of Commerce has worked with the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Community Foundation to set up this new Community Fund, which has been established to allow local companies to provide combined and more effective charitable support for small, local charities and community groups.

One of the benefits of the scheme is that companies contributing to the funding pot will have their donation "match funded" by the Government and by BAT's legacy fund. A £65 donation from a sole trader, which is gift aided, will only cost the donor £49 but this can be turned into £213 through this scheme.

Another benefit of the scheme is that charities will not have to write to different businesses but just send one application to the fund. Chamber members will help to decide which charities receive funding.

The event was sponsored by BAT to enable the Community Foundation to launch this new scheme.

Toni Shaw, Chief Executive Officer of the Southampton Business Grassroots Community Fund said that,

"I am delighted that the Southampton and Fareham Chamber of Commerce has set-up this fund to support the local community. Times are getting hard so it is good to see this community spirit supporting groups that struggle to make ends meet even during the good times. The fund will see every £1 matched with a further £1 from the Grassroots Challenge initiative and an additional match funding from the BAT Legacy means a £1,000 donation, which costs the company £790 can be turned into £2,500".

She added that any money not used through the matching scheme would have to go back to the Treasury and that they currently had £275,000 for the Southampton area alone.

Captain Jimmy Chestnutt, Director General of the Southampton and Fareham Chamber of Commerce urged businesses to get behind the scheme and said that,

"This scheme provides the opportunity for the Chamber of Commerce and its members to give something back to the community. We have a long history of working with and for businesses and communities in this region. We are enthusiastic about this project and see this as a way of building up a fund that will support local charities so that in 20 or 100 years time it will be an important part of the fabric of this society".

The High Sheriff of Hampshire, Michael Campbell who is Chair of the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Community Foundation and was present at the launch said that he was delighted to be invited to the event and that it was a privilege to be involved with the launch. He added that,

“The Southampton and Fareham Chamber of Commerce is a vibrant body and I am well aware that chambers have had a long involvement with the communities in which they are based. It is therefore relevant that this event has enabled us to talk about how businesses, charities and the community can connect more effectively and efficiently together through this exciting initiative, which will enable resources to go further”.

Any charities or businesses interested in finding out more about this scheme can find out more at [www.hantscf.org.uk/grassroots](http://www.hantscf.org.uk/grassroots) or can email [infograssroots@hantscf.org.uk](mailto:infograssroots@hantscf.org.uk)