

“Believing in Your Local Community: Wildlife and Green Spaces”

London Funders members, GrantScape and Church Urban Fund, have recently announced details of the four groups whose projects have been awarded grants of up to £9,500 through their innovative joint grants programme.

This programme was open earlier in 2009 to small faith-based community groups seeking to deliver nature conservation and green space projects, with a community benefit, in London. It attracted 22 applications from across the Greater London area, seeking a total of over £150,000.

London Funders’ Role

GrantScape originally approached London Funders in mid-2008 (not then being members) with a view to identifying possible co-funders for nature conservation projects in London which would also have a strong community value. After meeting Gaynor Humphreys and Belinda Birch, they were introduced to Church Urban Fund, and things moved ahead quickly from there.

Andrew Budd, GrantScape’s Grant Manager said: “London Funders’ were key to making our partnership grant programme possible. Without their introduction to Church Urban Fund, it simply wouldn’t have gone ahead”.

The Grant Programme

The new joint grant programme, “Believing in Your Local Community: Wildlife and Green Spaces”, was modeled on the 2008 “Health & Belief” pilot programme, devised by Church Urban Fund and London Catalyst. Clear guidelines were provided, set out on one page of A4, and these were supported by project examples on the reverse. A simplified application process was also followed, with groups just being required to give details of their projects, using a maximum two sides of A4.

The decision-making process was equally streamlined, with assessments being undertaken jointly by GrantScape’s Andrew Budd and by Nick Waters of Church Urban Fund, before being presented to the two charities’ senior management for approval.

Nick said: “Through working together, both organisations have been able to increase their reach to new applicants, whilst benefiting from each other’s range of specialist knowledge and experience. Church Urban Fund has benefited from GrantScape’s experience of funding community environmental projects, and both organisations have been able to ensure that the co-funded programme met their own funding priorities. Andrew and I agree that working closely with another funder also introduces your organisation to new procedures and ways of working that can help to shape your own practices.”

The Grant Recipients

The four successful applicants to the “Believing in Your Local Community: Wildlife and Green Spaces” grant programme were:

- **Newham Green Gym** – the group’s project will create a wildflower grassland meadow area by clearing scrubland at East Ham Nature Reserve, Newham
- **St Peter De Beauvoir Town Parochial Church Council** – this project will provide a community wildlife garden and make other landscaping improvements at St Peter's Church in De Beauvoir Town, Hackney (see picture below)
- **Parish of St Thomas Becontree** – the group’s project will provide a 'Field of Dreams' wildlife garden at St Thomas' Church, on the Becontree estate in Dagenham
- **Friends of St Mary's Churchyard, Leyton** – this project will enhance churchyard biodiversity at St Mary's Church in Leyton and make this space more welcoming to visitors

