

COMMUNITY INTEGRATION GRANTS

Sector consultation, April 2022

Introduction

OCF has run regular grants rounds with the aim of improving community integration since 2017, thanks to the contributions of a small cohort of philanthropists interested in this issue. We have seen community integration as broadly bringing together people from different backgrounds, who would not normally mix, to work on something together for their mutual benefit.

Modern grant-making best practice is encouraging funders to take a more participatory approach – bringing in the voices of the communities that are affected by the issues and that would benefit from the funding to help shape decisions around where funding should go. As a step in a more inclusive direction, OCF conducted a brief survey and ran a consultative workshop in April 2022, with the aim of better defining good community integration, and understanding what the needs and opportunities are in Oxfordshire.

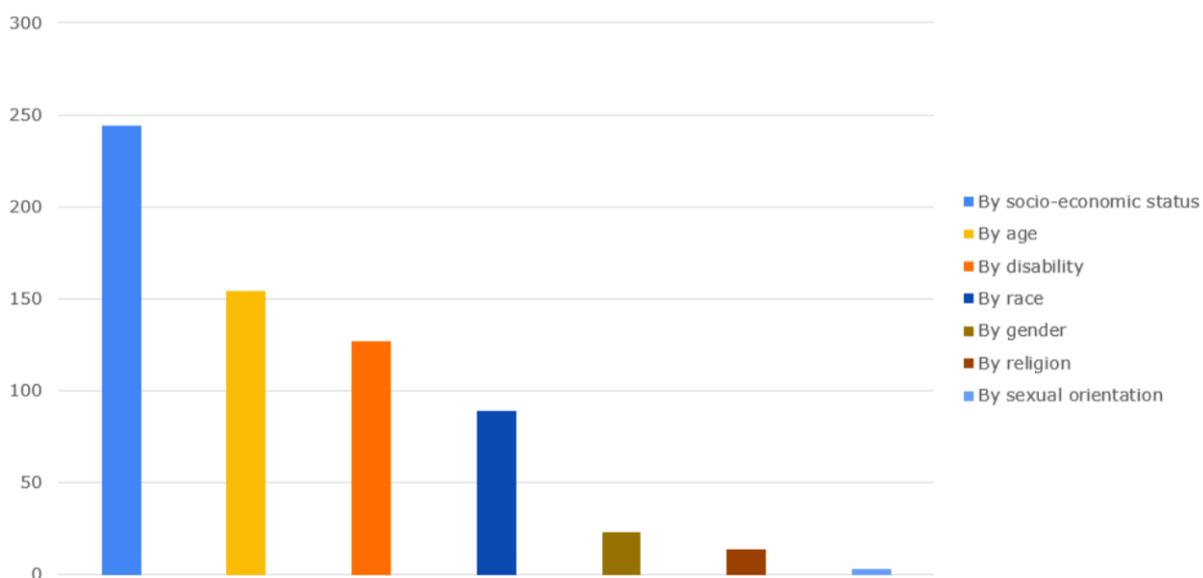
What is a community? How big is the area it covers? And what are the divisions or problems that show it is not integrated or cohesive (eg intolerance, lack of understanding)? How do we build bridges or break down barriers? These are the issues that were explored with a view to designing a grants programme that would make a real difference.

Please see the appendix for a full list of the organisations that responded.

Survey

The survey received **109 responses** from people working or volunteering in the charity sector across Oxfordshire. It was sent to OCF's mailing list of local charitable organisations (around 1,500 contacts). We asked two questions, and the results were as follows:

QUESTION 1: How do you think we should target funding to best support community integration in Oxfordshire?



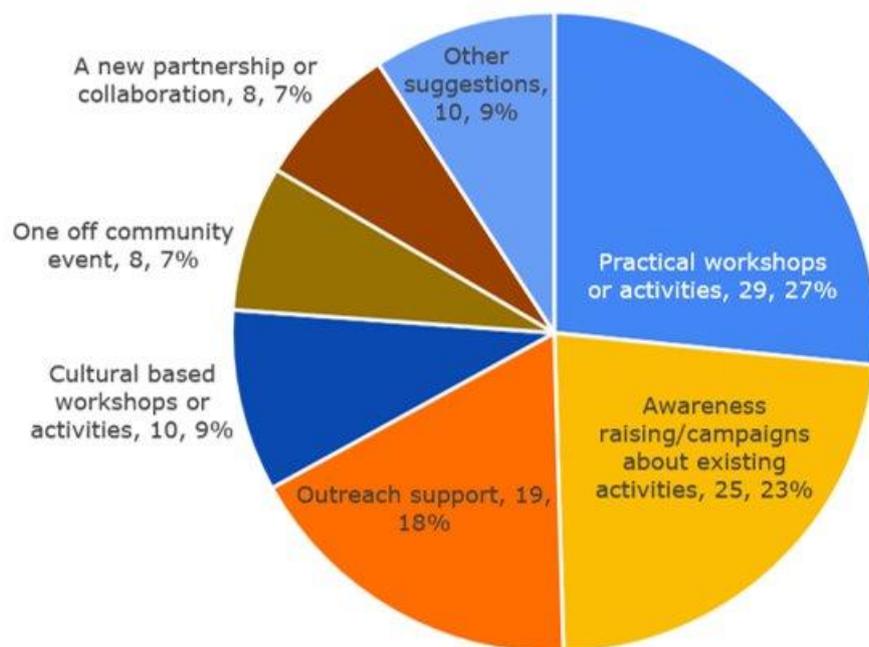
Respondents selected a first, second and third choice, which were then weighted to produce this summary.

Selected comments relating to this question:

- “If you target a specific sector of the community for funding/focus then by implication you are excluding others, this in my view doesn’t promote integration or inclusion.”
- “It’s not so much just the need for members of different ethnic communities to find common ground (though this is a good thing in itself) as the broader objective of helping deprived and isolated people of different types to meet and work together for a common good, if that is their wish.”
- “The single greatest factor that effects integration in and around Chipping Norton is the fact that we are rural. Wealthier residents have the capacity to leave the town and access resources, activities and ideas elsewhere in the country, and regularly do so. Poorer residents, however, are becoming increasingly cut off.”

During the workshop we acknowledged that this question may have been flawed in asking people to choose a single priority issue, suggesting segregation rather than integration – the first breakout in the workshop therefore focused on defining community integration more generally.

QUESTION 2: What type of activity would best support integration in your community?



“Other suggestions” include activities relating directly to charities’ priorities (eg sport), or a combination of elements (eg workshops leading to an event or series)

Selected comments relating to this question:

- “I don’t think that community integration can happen with one-off events. I think we need long-term relationships built up over a long period of time. People need do things together, meet new people and build confidence to gain new relationships.”
- “It has to happen generically but with intention – from within the community and then encouraging good practice.”
- “Investing in place-based collaborations at very local level would do much to accelerate integration across different groups as well in communities. The importance of day-to-day relationships and rootedness in place should not be underestimated.”

It is clear from the responses that a variety of activity types could make a big difference, but most respondents agreed that a one-off event by itself was not the most effective type of intervention, instead focusing on longer-term relationship-building (which could culminate in an event).



Workshop

The workshop was attended by **38 people** (54 had signed up). There was an introduction by Annette Ahern, presentation of the above survey results, and some discussion points raised by Simon Barnard. Attendees were put into three separate breakout groups to discuss two key questions: WHAT community integration is; and HOW we might do it better. They then fed ideas back to the main group. The following is a summary of the themes that came out across the groups.

QUESTION 1: What does good community integration mean to you?

- The notion of 'community' is different for each person and could be defined by geography, demographic or socio-economic background; we can each feel part of many different communities. Sometimes these cross over but sometimes they can be quite separate.
- There will naturally be interest groups who are more bonded, but the important thing is the **'bridges' connecting** them. In an integrated community anybody should feel happy to walk across the bridge to connect with people who are not like them, and feel part of a **wider whole**.
- Some people are **'hidden' or marginalised** in our society, such as people of minority ethnicities and genders, but also people who are on the face of it quite privileged, who might be suffering from particular issues, such as mental health difficulties. Achieving **equitable outcomes** for all groups is key to integration.
- The most common themes discussed were segregation across the **socio-economic** and **generational** divides. (Note that this may be due to the organisations represented, but it does also match the top themes coming out of the survey.)
- New communities/housing can be built in an area, without any effort at integration – this separates people by wealth or age. Integrating **newcomers/incomers** to a place without upsetting longstanding residents can be a challenge.
- **Inequality** generates segregation – eg an imbalance in access to facilities or decision-making structures. Good communities have some sort of 'hub' that is accessible to all – this might in the past have been the church, but what replaces that function now? A **"coordinating factor"** is needed.
- **COVID** has also meant that places or events where people may have mixed before have been lost. It has placed new demands on the physical infrastructure needed to run events safely. However, it has also been a unifying factor in some communities, as a reminder for everyone to support the most vulnerable (especially the elderly and economically disadvantaged).
- Integration needs to happen **naturally**.
- Charities provide good community links but smaller charities can be excluded due to **communication** issues – this can limit the most vulnerable parts of the community getting information about integration opportunities (eg refugees).
- **Partnership working** between charities can bring about good integration across a particular area, eg the Blackbird Leys Partnership. A challenge of this is where the area or scope of partnership is too large and becomes unmanageable.
- Evidence of a thriving community includes levels of happiness; physical activity; partnership working; people knowing where to go to find support; an acceptance of and respect for **diversity**; an increased **sense of belonging** to a place [could this be summarised as **"social capital"**?!].

QUESTION 2: What type of activity would best support integration in your community?

- An **asset-based approach** – solutions generated from within the community via a **co-production** methodology that encourages beneficiary participation, recognising people's different capacities and preferences (eg by including neuro-diverse people); involving everyone in local decision-making – working from the grassroots up, allowing communities to make decisions for themselves; conceiving ideas jointly via collaborative processes
- Raising the **voices of those traditionally excluded**, even if this means 'over-representation'



- Encouraging **cross-community events** with practical activities, where there is something for everyone and marginalised people are specifically invited; engaging communities through food
- **Open-access/universal activities**, or **targeted work** that encourages specific types of integration? The latter may build trust and confidence for more marginalised communities to then participate in more universal activities; eg a mothers' group for black women that has built social capital to the extent that these women now feel comfortable joining more general parenting groups.
- **Volunteering** groups that bring people from different backgrounds together around a shared purpose
- Engaging both marginalised and non-marginalised parts of the community – working within **existing infrastructure**; but recognising that not everyone wants to integrate, and that this is okay
- Building **stronger communications** between communities, making sure everyone is aware of activities that are already established, and reaching communities that are not already engaged; having a referral mechanism to existing wraparound services (Oxfordshire County Council have a longstanding idea to have a central comms hub for community activities)
- Encourage strong, successful **partnership working** – across organisations to share knowledge and resources, or reach wider audiences; could include cross-organisational placements to boost skills
- Both **short-term and long-term** activities and partnerships have their place – it depends on the desired outcomes and also funding availability; building something sustainable from the outset – longer-term funding would make a more genuine difference (3–5 years)
- **Core costs funding** is seen as essential to fund existing work that is already happening, and to bolster staff resources to enable genuine, long-term outcomes; project-based funding needs to have the flexibility to include some core cost contribution to every project

Recommendations

The following are summary considerations for the OCF grants team to take into account when devising the Terms of Reference and application criteria for the community integration grants round planned to open in May 2022. It may be that it is not possible to follow every recommendation, eg due to budget constraints.

Key themes

- Communities were generally understood to be defined by **place** (village or neighbourhood), and good integration was building **lasting connections** between different groups of interest or demographic. An integrated community is one where people feel a **sense of belonging and ownership** over their place; where traditionally marginalised voices are heard; and where everyone has a role in decision-making.
- **Coordinating hubs** such as community centres and community ladders are crucial to foster this sense of belonging, and should be places where everyone feels welcome. They can also be central hubs and places where **partnership** working happens.
- Tackling **inequality** generally would improve community integration, with a particular focus on **socio-economic** and **intergenerational** inequality. This needs to happen by engaging marginalised and non-marginalised parts of the community together.
- The **pandemic** provides an opportunity as well as a challenge, as it has united disparate communities around a common cause. Work that is capitalising on the **connections already built** in response to COVID-19 could greatly increase community integration.

Key activity types

- Activities that involve grassroots members of the community in **devising their own projects**
- **One-off** cross-community events when balanced with **long-term** outreach and relationship-building
- Activity should bring people together with a **practical focus** and sense of **shared purpose**



- A charity's **existing activity** may well fulfil the criteria and should be funded rather than expecting new activity to be devised in response to a grants round
- Both **universal** and **targeted** work
- Activity that prioritises acceptance and respect of **diversity**
- **Partnerships** between organisations
- **Sustainable funding types**, ie multi-year and core cost

Thank you

OCF would like to thank everyone who took part in our survey and workshop to help shape our approach to community integration grants. We know that the time and expertise of people working and volunteering in the local charitable sector is extremely valuable, and we hugely appreciate your participation.

OCF will continue to consult the sector on future grant priorities and needs.



Appendix

Organisations represented in survey and workshop

Total organisations: 113

Some individual respondents represented multiple organisations. Some organisations both responded to the survey and attended the workshop.

Organisation	Survey	Workshop
Abingdon DAMASCUS Youth Project	Y	Y
Age UK Oxfordshire	Y	
Agnes Smith Advice Centre	Y	
ARCh (Assisted Reading for Children)	Y	
Ark-T	Y	
Aspire Oxfordshire	Y	Y
Asylum Welcome	Y	
Autism Family Support		Y
Be Free Young Carers	Y	
Berks Bucks Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust	Y	Y
Bicester Evergreens	Y	
Blackbird Leys Adventure Playground	Y	Y
Blackbird Leys Boxing Club	Y	
Blackbird Leys Information Technology Zone (BLITZ)	Y	
Botley Bridges Family Support	Y	
Bridewell Gardens	Y	
Brightwell Preschool	Y	
Chalgrove and Watlington First Steps Family Hub	Y	Y
Cherwell Theatre Company	Y	Y
Christian Concern for One World (CCOW)		Y
City of Oxford Charity	Y	
Clean Slate	Y	
Community Glue CIC	Y	
Community Heartbeat Trust charity	Y	
Cornerstone Charlbury as part of Charlbury PCC	Y	
CPRE Oxfordshire	Y	
Creative Dementia Arts Network	Y	Y
Cotteslowe Community Association		Y
Cotteslowe Seniors	Y	
Decadent Times CIC	Y	
Didcot First		Y
Didcot TRAIN - inspiring young people	Y	
Donnington Over-50's	Y	Y
Dovecote Voluntary Parent Committee	Y	



Organisation	Survey	Workshop
Down's Syndrome Oxford	Y	
Earth Trust	Y	Y
Friends of Trap Grounds	Y	
Grandpont Nursery School Association	Y	Y
Great Western Park Church	Y	
Greater Leys Youth FC	Y	
GreenSquareAccord Ltd.	Y	
Headington Action (Connected Communities)	Y	
Healthy Abingdon	Y	Y
Hendred Sports Club	Y	
Homeless Link	Y	
Home-Start Banbury, Bicester & Chipping Norton	Y	
Kirtlington Youth Club	Y	
Letcombe Football Club	Y	
Let's Play Project	Y	
Leys CDI Community Development Initiative	Y	Y
Littleworth Church	Y	
Low Carbon Oxford North	Y	
Makespace Oxford	Y	
Maymessy CIC	Y	
My Life My Choice	Y	
Nettlebed Good Neighbours Scheme	Y	
NOMAD Henley		Y
Oxford and District Mencap	Y	
Oxford City Athletic Club	Y	
Oxford City Council - Grants Team	Y	Y
Oxford Hindu Temple	Y	
Oxford Hub	Y	
Oxford Mutual Aid		Y
Oxford North Africa Community (ONAC)	Y	
Oxford Ramblers	Y	
Oxfordshire African Caribbean Multicultural (OACMA)	Y	
Oxfordshire Breastfeeding Support	Y	
Oxfordshire Community Foundation	Y	Y
Oxfordshire County Council	Y	Y
Oxfordshire Crossroads	Y	
Oxfordshire Family Support Network	Y	
Oxfordshire Foster Care Association		Y
Oxfordshire Foster Care Association	Y	
Oxfordshire Homeless Movement	Y	
Oxfordshire Play Association	Y	



Organisation	Survey	Workshop
Oxfordshire Youth	Y	
Oxon Association for the Blind	Y	
OXPIP	Y	Y
People Place and Participation Ltd	Y	
Q1 Foundation	Y	
Quest for Learning	Y	Y
Refugee Resource	Y	Y
Restore	Y	Y
Ricochet TC	Y	
Root and Branch	Y	Y
Second Time Around	Y	
Sibford Lunch Club	Y	
SOMA Housing Co-Operative Ltd	Y	
South Oxford Community Association	Y	
St Luke's Church	Y	
Style Acre	Y	Y
Summertown Neighbourhood Forum	Y	
Sunrise Multicultural Project	Y	
Sunshine Centre	Y	Y
Sutton Courtenay Drama for 7 Up	Y	Y
Sutton Courtenay Village Hall	Y	
Thame and District Day Centre		Y
The Abingdon Bridge	Y	
The Archway Foundation	Y	
The City of Oxford Charity	Y	
The Gatehouse	Y	Y
The Story Museum	Y	
The Theatre Chipping Norton	Y	
The Valentine Club	Y	
Thomley	Y	
Visually Impaired But Not Old (VIBNO)	Y	
Wantage and Grove Family Community Group (GroW Families)	Y	
We care2 (a small social/singing group for dementia people and their carers)	Y	Y
Wesley Memorial Methodist Church	Y	
Witney Buttercross Scouts	Y	
Wolvercote Village Hall	Y	
Yellow Submarine	Y	Y
Youth Challenge Oxfordshire (YoCO)	Y	
TOTAL	105	34

