

HOW OXFORD COMMUNITY GRANTS HAVE BEEN PUT TO WORK



Alice's Day in Christ Church Cathedral gardens, one of many projects supported by the Community Fund

Transcript of interviews

Saskia Huggins, Osney Lock Hydro:

Osney Lock Hydro is an entirely voluntary-run organisation which will generate renewable energy right in the heart of Oxford. We're really grateful that Oxford University and several other bodies have come forward and are helping us with our aim to try and realise the potential of the site to deliver that broader message about sustainability.

Running behind the hydro scheme there's a great amount of technical kit, and it's about generating electricity. But for me, the real power behind this project, it's about the power of people.

Christine Brooks, heritage consultant:

The fear for a project like this is that there may be members of the community or the wider population who miss out on the fantastic heritage of this site. This grant from the University is helping fund my time with the Osney Lock Hydro Board to share this with other community projects around the country, but also it is to let the local community know about what's going on here onsite.

Throughout time the Thames has been used to power mills – along this particular stretch in fact – so this project is just another manifestation of how the Thames is being used to harness that power, and this energy and all the efforts are being fed right back into the community. It's under community ownership, and sharing this good news with West Oxford is a thing we must do

Martin Gillett, Manager, Oxford Play Association:

We're a local charity and our main aim is to get kids outside, playing, being active and not sat at home on a sofa eating chips and playing on Xboxes. What we've

been looking at, particularly in Oxford city, is to get kids access to sort of natural play areas – woods, things like that. The idea of this is zero cost: there's no fixed equipment to be maintained; there's no insurance to be paid by anyone; this area will just grow as the children play with it.

The University has very kindly given us some funding towards this – they've contributed to the cost of clearing it, for the staff time etc, including for today's activities. The good thing about today's activities is not only encouraging children to come outside, but also giving some sort of life skills around fire, how to build dens etc. It's all about team work, working together. As I say, it links into school work around science, things like that, so it's a win-win situation really, it covers lots of bases.

Alexandra Coke, the Story Museum:

I'm part of the team coordinating Alice's Day this year. It's a celebration of *Alice in Wonderland*, so on 4 July all the cultural venues across the city are getting involved and doing free family events: crafting, songwriting, storytelling – absolutely everything for every age group as well, because we've also got talks for adults.

The University gave us a community fund grant, and that helped us with the education workshops. We really want to connect the children of Oxford with their literary heritage, because you often find that children, especially people who live out in Blackbird Leys and in Barton, don't really think of Oxford as for being for them – and Christ Church and the Bodleian and all of these amazing places and museums as being for them. And actually we wanted to explain to these children that, 'Look this is your place, for you.'