

Raising revenue - products and services which can bring in revenue

THE CHALLENGE

Market towns looking to develop community projects need to approach the issue of funding from a variety of angles.

While grants represent one potential way of raising cash, funding bodies are increasingly looking for evidence that projects are sustainable once their money has run out.

In some cases, there is a requirement for money to be generated within the community before projects are supported with match funding.

Several of Gloucestershire's market towns have come up with innovative ways of raising revenue to support community projects.

In some cases, such as in Newent, much use has been made of the town's natural assets to raise money through sales of a book of walks. Other towns have generated income by using facilities that have been funded by grants, such as Chipping Campden's Community Centre.

SUCCESSFUL IDEAS

Books of Walks

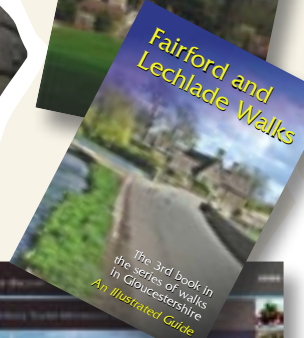
Two books featuring circular walks around the **Newent** area have proved a real money-spinner for the town.

The Newent Initiative Trust (NIT) worked with organisations including Newent's camera club and civic society on the project which was funded by the former Countryside Agency, the Gloucestershire Market Towns Forum and the Oxford, Swindon and Gloucester Co-operative Society (now Mid Counties).

The walks made the most of the newly upgraded footpaths between Newent and nearby villages. The underlying aim for the books was that they would encourage more people to make the most of facilities in the town, such as pubs, cafés, shops and bed and breakfasts, while exploring the surrounding countryside.

An idea to raise further money from the books with sales of advertising space was explored but subsequently rejected during the early years of the project. However, it remains an option for future editions.

Money raised from sales of the books has been ploughed into NIT for future projects.





The success of the Newent books has led to the idea being taken up jointly in **Lechlade and Fairford** using money from the Aggregates Fund resulting from the gravel extraction that takes place in that area, and **Dursley**, which won Lottery funding to cover the cost of its books. All three towns received advice from the Gloucestershire Market Towns Forum when putting together their books.

Other communities have been successful in raising money by organising guided walks. **Dymock** has been particularly successful in putting on tours of the hamlets once inhabited by the Dymock Poets, featuring readings of their poetry by a local expert.

Multi-use Community Centres

Many community centres now include space that is available to rent by community groups or organisations such as businesses, health practitioners and local authorities.

Money generated from renting out office space and meeting rooms can be used to offset the costs of running the building.

The Victorian police station in **Chipping Campden** lay empty and decaying for 10 years before being given a new lease of life.

After being bought by Chipping Campden Town Council, the three-storey building was converted into a community facility. It now offers rooms for local organisations, such as a pre-school playgroup and local history society and an office for the town clerk as well as revenue-raising space for activities such as glass-making and physiotherapy.

A similar approach in **Fairford** is also proving a winner in terms of generating revenue.

More than £1 million has been raised through organisations such as the Heritage Lottery Fund and Gloucestershire Rural Renaissance to convert a former school into a community centre for the town.

Work is now underway to refurbish and modernise the building and soon it will offer the latest modern facilities for meetings, small business conferences and events, as well as a 'one stop' shop offering information for local people.

The centre's appeal to local businesses has been enhanced by power point presentation equipment, a hearing loop and tables and chairs funded with a grant from the Gloucestershire Market Towns Forum.

The community centre has been in such demand from local companies and organisations such as colleges that it was in profit within its first year of operation, despite having only limited space available.

In **Winchcombe**, The Abbey Fields Centre is bringing in income by renting out space to the Gloucestershire Constabulary for a police station.



Events and Concerts

Newent Lake is brought alive every summer with a series of brass band concerts.

The brass bands themselves are sponsored by local businesses, recruited by the Newent Initiative Trust, which means that donations put in the buckets handed around after each concert can be ploughed straight into projects being carried out for the benefit of the community.

Calendars

Wotton-under-Edge's successful community-run Electric Picture House cinema has raised hundreds of pounds through sales of themed calendars. The first calendar placed well known faces from the town in famous film sets.

Sponsorship for each calendar is sought from Wotton's business community. This year the cinema was awarded funding from the Market and Coastal Towns Association after winning the regional Market Towns award.

Websites

A new website designed to promote **Tetbury** as a destination for tourists is set to generate revenue by holding on-line auctions.

Local companies will be able to secure valuable publicity by donating lots – such as meals in restaurants or rooms in hotels – with funds raised going to support other community projects.

Town Hall Teas

Charities in **Wotton-under-Edge** have been raising invaluable funds for their work over the last 14 years by offering Sunday afternoon teas and refreshments at their local town hall.

Wotton-under-Edge Town Council draws up a rota of organisations to run the weekly service which is popular with walkers passing through the town on the Cotswold Way, as well as visitors and local families alike.

Charities providing town hall teas do not have to pay rent for the hall itself, which means every penny they make can be spent on their work. Extra funds can be generated by running raffles, bric-a-brac stalls and tombolas.

Demand to run town hall teas in Wotton is such that sessions are currently booked up a year in advance, with a reserve list.

The town hall teas season runs from April to November and last year added just under £10,000 to the coffers of local charities.



TOP TIPS

- **Don't re-invent the wheel:** Make the most of other towns' good ideas – and don't be afraid to ask advice from groups who have carried out similar projects in the past.
- **Be brazen:** Cover the cost of revenue-raising events, such as concerts and calendars, by asking local businesses to sponsor them. Sell the idea by explaining how community projects are making a difference to the quality of life in your town – something that has direct benefits to businesses such as estate agents!
- **Be professional:** Revenue raising projects have the added benefit of raising the profile of an organisation. Make sure the finished project is presented in as professional a way as possible as this reflects on the organisation as a whole.
- **Think laterally:** Don't just offer a service – actively seek out people who may be able to use it. Wotton-under-Edge has pulled in appreciative customers for its town hall teas by approaching people leading guided walks around the town. Organisers also work with the Electric Picture House to offer birthday teas to children celebrating their special days by taking friends to see a film.
- **Don't be afraid to shoot over the goal:** Great ways of raising revenue have come from the most absurd ideas! Invite people from all backgrounds to brainstorming sessions and see what emerges.



CONTACTS AND FURTHER INFORMATION

Gloucestershire Market Towns Forum

Tel: 01452 425953 • E-mail: daniel.judges@gloucestershire.gov.uk
www.town2town.org.uk

Fairford Town Council

Tel: 01285 712344 • E-mail: fairford@cotswoldwireless.co.uk
www.fairford-tc.co.uk

Lechlade Town Council

Tel: 01367 252338 • E-mail: clerk@lechladeonthames.co.uk
www.lechladeonthames.co.uk

Newent Initiative Trust

Peter Street Tel: 01531 820 903 • E-mail: peter.street6@btinternet.com

Electric Picture House, Wotton-under-Edge Janet and Jeff Walshe.

Tel: 01453 843060 • E-mail: jeff@fairmech.freeserve.co.uk
www.wottoneph.co.uk

Chipping Campden Community Centre John Ellis

Tel: 01386 841253 • E-mail: ellis.consultant@virgin.net

Tetbury Town Council

Tel: 01666 504670
www.tetbury.gov.uk

Market and Coastal Towns Association

www.mcti.org.uk

South West Regional Development Agency

www.southwestrda.org.uk

.....
'Raising revenue – products and services which can bring in revenue' is one in a series of case studies, sponsored by the Market and Coastal Towns Association, each spotlighting an issue or challenge faced by a GMTF member town.

Each case study presents:

- the **initial challenge** or issue faced by the town
- how a **solution** was developed
- how it was **rolled out**
- how it is being **sustained**
- **top tips** – useful information and advice to other communities which may be facing similar issues
- **contact details** to help you find out more

