

## From transaction to transformation



UKCF members at the 2023 CEO retreat

*Community foundation leaders from 44 members of the UK network gathered over two days in May to share knowledge and look ahead to the future challenges facing communities. Discussions were ignited by input online from US-based Ekstrom Alley Clontz & Associates, who brought their reflection on the community foundation model - highlighting that transparency and engagement are key to build trust for donors and to shape their philanthropic journey.*

The UK Community Foundations (UKCF) network includes 47 UK-based members and three overseas members. It was fantastic to be joined in person by Jersey Community Foundation's CEO, Anna Terry, and Bermuda Community Foundation's CEO, Myra Virgil.

Meeting in person at Conference Aston, located on Birmingham's Aston University campus, the charity leaders were welcomed by UK Community Foundations CEO, Rosemary Macdonald, and Sussex Community Foundation CEO, Kevin Richmond.

CEO of Foundation Scotland, Giles Ruck, discussed the balance between providing preventative and responsive support, and the role that community foundations have in navigating both forms. Communities and charities are at an "inflection point", having come out of the pandemic only to enter an economic crisis. Now is the time to utilise a new sense of energy to push forwards into the next phase of climate action and effective social change.

Zoe Sprigings, CEO at Oxfordshire Community Foundation, led a session about the positive global impact that can stem from local action being taken to protect the environment. She stressed the importance of bringing the environment into grant making as a golden thread, integral and achievable, to better engage communities.

The network was joined by Steve Alley, a community foundations consultant at Ekstrom Alley Clontz & Associates in Tuscan, Arizona, and his colleagues Tony Macklin, Sheryl Aikman and Brian Frederick. Their session, 'From transaction to transformation' explored the model of community foundations around the world and the value of bringing donors on the journey to providing more sustainable giving that builds core stability for charities and the causes they serve.

“Come to a community foundation when you want to take a dive into making change in the community... Two factors that build trust for donors and shape their philanthropic journey are transparency and engagement.”

- Steve Alley, Ekstrom Alley Clontz & Associates

Somerset Community Foundation CEO, Justin Sargent, and Devon Community Foundation CEO, Cerri Goddard, jointly led a session about rural philanthropy, the hidden inequalities of remote communities and Equality Impact Grant Making (EIG). Targeting funding towards organisations with good equality practice and groups who work on mitigating inequalities within communities, and aligning with donors who promote the same principals of tackling and preventing inequalities, will enable funders of all types to make impactful changes.

“There is no such thing as an equality-neutral grant - you’re either doing something good or something bad... How you do it is as important as what you do.”

- Ceri Goddard, CEO at Devon Community Foundation

Reflecting on the two days, here’s what some CEOs said:

“The chance to meet with people face-to-face and share this job and responsibility we feel towards our places is brilliant. The ‘inflection point’ notion stood out to me; it’s a moment in history where everything is very complex and we’re dealing with very changeable times, but also there’s a danger that we could be destroyed if we don’t do anything about it now.”

- Kate Hainsworth, CEO at Leeds Community Foundation and GiveBradford

“This has been a fantastic couple of days representing community foundations. We’ve discussed a lot of key issues, like how we promote Black leadership in our communities, how we reach a wider range of donors and looking at the sustainability of the community foundation model.

“It shows the strength and the importance of the community foundation network. For me, it’s about realising the challenges all our communities are facing, and the crucial role we have in supporting people to develop positive change for the future.”

- Kevin Richmond, CEO at Sussex Community Foundation

“It’s been wonderful to stop, think and reflect. We don’t often get time to do this, we’re always rushing ahead, so this has been a great opportunity.”

- Talitha Nelson, CEO at Gloucestershire Community Foundation

“One key take away was that we are all thinking about similar issues and challenges, we all have similar approaches to our work, but we become quite invigorated around how we can implement new changes when we come together. Another was that it is the right direction that we are taking to look at the types of work we do and decide what fits going forward and what might we have to let go of as we tackle challenges we are encountering over the next year.”

- Myra Virgil, CEO at Bermuda Community Foundation

The event was also attended by the Community Foundations of New Zealand’s Marketing and Membership Services Director, Eleanor Cater, who is visiting the UK to learn more about growing community philanthropy.

“What I love about international conferences is that you see that challenges across the world are very similar. It drives home to me the importance of this work. It’s really important that we activate philanthropy in communities, that we shift it in the sectors of society that really need it. We’re the crucial connector in that space.”

- Eleanor Cater, Marketing and Membership Services Director at Community Foundations of New Zealand

More information on the network of community foundations in the UK can be found [here](#).

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May 2023