

## **Port Community Fund Celebrates Community Giving**

The ‘inspirational’ achievements of the unique Felixstowe-based Port Community Fund have been highlighted at a special awards ceremony.

The event, held at Felixstowe Town Hall, brought together members of the Port Community Fund with business, charity and community representatives, including the Mayor of Felixstowe, Doreen Savage, who presented PCF plaques to several organisations supported by the fund.

The Port Community Fund was created in 2008 when a group of companies in and around the Port of Felixstowe – including the port itself – decided to pool their resources so that together they could do more to support local charities and build a ‘mutually supportive relationship’ with the local community.

It is managed by the Suffolk Community Foundation, whose chief executive, Stephen Singleton told guests at the event: “Not a week goes by without negative news and coverage of business behaviour. Banks, retail, car production – you name it. But business does so much good, usually unreported.

“In the case of Felixstowe, something extraordinary has happened. A group of companies came together in a structured, organised approach to maximise their giving, its impact and its benefit.”

The results have been truly staggering, he said; so far, the Port Community Fund has made 168 grants to 62 different organisations, with a combined value in excess of £310,000. In addition, the members are building an endowment fund to provide for grant making in perpetuity; this already exceeds £150,000, and the ambition is to reach £1 million.

Statistics from the National Council of Voluntary Organisations show that just 3% of charities operating across England and Wales took 68% of available funding last year, said Stephen Singleton. That figure is particularly relevant to Suffolk; there are very few charities operating in the county on a national level, but there are nearly 3,000 charitable organisations across the county and an estimated 2,000 community groups, all contributing to community life.

Suffolk is seen as an affluent community – and for many, it is – but that masks a different picture, with significant levels of poverty and disadvantage in the county, he said.

He praised the Port Community Fund as ‘enlightened and absolutely inspirational’.

The Mayor handed out plaques to the Disability Advice Service (East Suffolk), which received the first ever grant made by the fund, and to East Suffolk Association for the Blind, Felixstowe Area Community Transport, Suffolk Cruse Bereavement Care, the Woolverstone Project and Bumblebee Children’s Charity.

Mike Deacon, chair of East Suffolk Association for the Blind, said: “Without the funding from the Port Community Fund, quite simply we couldn’t manage.”

**Note to Editors:**

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A high-resolution photograph is available at: <https://hpuk.sharefile.com/d-s3a4b40242f243629>

The members of the Port Community Fund are, Cosco, Cory Brothers, Freightliner, Grange Shipping, Harwich Haven Authority, MCP Plc, Pentalver Transport Ltd, Port of Felixstowe and Trinity College. The Fund was created in 2008 and is administered by the Suffolk Community Foundation, an independent grant-maker to Suffolk local charities and community groups, tackling disadvantage in whatever form it takes. The Suffolk Foundation Community Foundation is part of the UK Community Foundations Network.

As a community foundation, the Suffolk Community Foundation is the main channel for individuals and families to invest in local charities and community groups, addressing pressing social issues in Suffolk. Since 2005, The Suffolk Community Foundation has distributed over £7 million in grants to local groups on behalf of its donors, supporting over 1,500 local charities and community groups.

The websites for the Port Community Fund and Suffolk Community Foundation can be found at [www.portcommunityfund.co.uk](http://www.portcommunityfund.co.uk) and [www.suffolkfoundation.org.uk](http://www.suffolkfoundation.org.uk)