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NEWS RELEASE

New Community Fund money available

Longtown Market Town Initiative (MTI) has secured an extra £10k of funding for community groups, in addition to the £15k Community Fund announced earlier last year.

Helen Sykes leads the team of three staff at the MTI and she is hoping for applications from a range of organisations in and around Longtown: "The Fund covers our whole area of 13 parishes, from Arthuret and Askerton to Stapleton and Westlinton. The application process is very easy and we can consider grants of up to £500 for organisations or up to £250 for requests from individuals."

Nearly 20 different grants were agreed from the initial Fund and they covered all age groups and about half of the parishes. Projects included the printing of a local heritage book for Nicholforest Heritage Society and a PA System for Longtown Community Centre. Improvements to kitchens in public halls were a popular grant request and Longtown MTI were able to help out with at least three such projects across the MTI area.

Melvyn Redgers is the chair of the Longtown & District Enterprise Trust, which secured the funding for the MTI from the Northwest Regional Development Agency (NWDA). "The Longtown MTI is enhancing various aspects of life in and around Longtown through infrastructure improvements, business support and community grants," he says. "This addition of more money to the Fund reflects both local needs and the contribution that this kind of investment can make to life in our communities."

David Hunter, NWDA Head of Rural Affairs, said: "Community groups play an important part in helping to shape the economic development of rural areas. Additional funding for this scheme reflects the importance of community-based projects in improving the quality of life in the Longtown area."

Advice and assistance with the Community Fund application process is readily available from Violet Nelson with further information available online at www.longtown.org/mti or from the MTI office on 01228 792778.

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Editor's notes

Longtown Market Town Initiative is a locally managed partnership initiative programme that is expected to run until March 2008. In 2005, it was awarded £1 million by Northwest Regional Development Agency to implement a regeneration programme, focused on helping existing businesses to develop and grow and on enabling individuals in the area to improve their earning potential. The project has now been successful in securing additional ERDF European funding (more than £26k) to assist start up businesses and to enable local micro businesses to expand.

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