

***Application for Funding: North British Hotels Trust***– This is an excerpt from a successful application for match funding. The match funding request was for the Merkinch community newsletter. This section provided background information about Merkinch Enterprise and the funding initiative.

**Name of Project:** Residents' Action on Poverty Programme (RAPP)

**Organization:** Merkinch Enterprise (Inland Revenue, Scotland, N. 138569)

**Subject:** request for funding of community newsletter

### **Organization**

Merkinch Enterprise, founded in 1992, is a company limited with charitable status. Our community enterprise mission is to develop economic and social initiatives that work to relieve poverty and social conditions in the Merkinch ward of Inverness.

### **Purpose of Appeal**

Merkinch Enterprise is seeking to secure match funding for the Residents' Action on Poverty Programme (RAPP). RAPP has received a grant from the National Lotteries Charity Board to assist in the 3-year strategic development plan (1996-1998). The plan strives to increase local employment, social development and community awareness in the Merkinch ward of Inverness.

This particular appeal is a request for match funding for one key portion of the RAPP project: the community newsletter.

### **Project Background**

The Merkinch ward of Inverness is considered one of the most economically and socially distressed areas in Scotland. Research through the Auris programme at Aberdeen University confirms that Merkinch is one of the 5 most deprived areas in the country. It stands as the only area in Inverness which sustains a 'multiple deprivation' label under the British government's Urban Aid Scheme. To compound these statistics, as of December, the unemployment rate was between 21% - 27%, as compared to the Scottish average of 10.4%. These unemployment rates are disproportionately higher amongst the young (aged 16 – 24). Merkinch also has a higher incident of lone parent families and elderly population - more than anywhere else in the Highlands. With these dire statistics, it is not hard to see why community spirit and social development are a paramount service for Merkinch residents.

Part of Merkinch Enterprise's remit is to help create prosperity and confidence within the community. A community newsletter has been running as part of the European Social Fund (ESF) project. It was initially set up to offer local people job skills in the writing and publishing industry. The community newsletter was seen as a foundation for building community spirit. The Merkinch News & Views, as it has come to be known, is also used as a local platform for initiatives, opportunities and social awareness. Local residents are able to read news concerning their community and local businesses are able to advertise directly to their target market. The training project was deemed a triumph.

The successful outcome of the training project, which finished on December 31st, has led Merkinch Enterprise to the conclusion that it is an effective media tool and voice that the community can and should build upon. Part of this conclusion is evident in the commitment of those trainees who have become volunteers in order to ensure that the newsletter continues its monthly production. Community commitment is essential and it is our firm belief that this project should continue to grow.

The economic viability of the newsletter depends upon the successful application of our RAPP initiative. As well as providing an immense benefit to people suffering from the adverse effects of poverty, part of the long-term strategy is to employ local residents on the newsletter, thus the project clearly serves both social and economic benefits to the community.