Urgent East Midlands Appeal To Save Multi-Million Pound Charity Scheme

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A scheme which has provided millions of pounds? worth of support to community groups across the East Midlands is in danger of closure.

ProHelp gives local groups, clubs and charities free access to professional services they wouldn?t otherwise be able to afford. But now the scheme itself needs an urgent cash injection ? and the region?s businesses are being urged to help save it. Since it began in the region 20 years ago, ProHelp has supported 2,500 projects in Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire and Northamptonshire. It has also helped hundreds of voluntary organisations to stay in existence and safeguard jobs. Te volunteer firms have provided around 20,000 hours of services, the equivalent of more than 10 years of support in total and given free access to expertise estimated to be worth more than £2.5m

ProHelp member firms undertake one-off projects such as feasibility studies, structural surveys or property valuations, the development of marketing strategies or business plans ? and all types of legal and financial advice. For the last six years, most of ProHelp?s running costs have been met by the European Regional Development Fund, but that backing ends in September. Around £50,000 a year is needed to keep the

scheme going.

Now a recruitment drive has been launched. Every new company which joins its local county ProHelp team will help to reduce the funding shortfall through an annual membership fee which ranges from £100 to £1,000 for larger companies. Those companies that don?t want to commit to giving free services are being invited to consider a cash donation to ProHelp instead. Unless £50,000 is raised, ProHelp is likely to close by the end of 2015. The unpaid support brokered through ProHelp is currently volunteered by 80 local companies ? including solicitors, accountants, architects, surveyors, PR consultants, graphic designers, IT experts and business advisors.

The Chair of Nottinghamshire ProHelp Adam Jeffrey, Director at Chimera Consulting, said, "It?s enormously rewarding to be involved and we know it makes a huge difference. It would be a tragedy if the scheme was lost, so we need the whole business community to step up and help us keep this brilliant scheme going. If ProHelp finishes, the losers will be the charities and community groups of the East Midlands.? See what Tim Glynn, from Adodo Consultancy, one of the volunteer companies has to say about ProHelp here.

For further information contact the county ProHelp chairs:

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Examples of groups and projects supported by ProHelp

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