

**TITLE OF REPORT: CHAMPION NEWS AND FINANCE REPORT**

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF POLICY, PARTERNSHIPS AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To advise the Committee of the activities and schemes with which the Community Development Officer has been involved.
- 1.2 To bring to the Committee's attention some important community based activities that will be taking place during the next few months.
- 1.3 To advise the Committee of the current expenditure and balances of the Area Committee's delegated funds.
- 1.4 For the Committee to confirm the level of assistance to be awarded to the Jump Project - Appendix B
- 1.5 For the Committee to confirm the level of assistance to be awarded to the Mill fm Radio Project – Appendix C

**2. FORWARD PLAN**

- 2.1 This report does not contain a recommendation on a key decision and has not been referred to in the Forward Plan.

**3. PROJECT/ACTIVITY/SCHEME DETAILS****3.1 Remembrance Day 2009**

The British Legion asked why no flag was flying in Hitchin on Remembrance Sunday. The flag pole at the Town Hall has a broken mechanism and a suggestion has been made for a permanent 9 m flag pole to be put up in the Market Place. The cost for this has been quoted at £733. Members comments welcomed.

**3.2 Two Bees Residents Association**

At the recent meeting to discuss the possibility of forming a Residents Association it was agreed by those present to launch the Residents Association in February 2010. This will take place on Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> February, 2010, at Hitchin Rugby Club.

**3.3 Hitchin Outdoor Pool Extended Opening**

During the 2009 summer season Hitchin Area Committee paid for the Hitchin Outdoor Pool to be opened later two evenings a week (Mondays & Wednesdays) for an additional 1.5hrs during the summer holidays (6 weeks). The two days chosen were based on attendance figures from previous years information.

A summary of the attendance for the 2009 season is below:

In general a good attendance was experienced with on average 20 customers using the extended hours per session.

Part of the pool was hired out to a swimming club and this helped to control costs.

With the combination of the good attendance and control of costs the actual grant required to fund the additional hours has reduced from £3,150 to £2,158.

Many customers provided positive feedback regarding the extending opening hours and proposals for the 2010 summer season will be presented to the Committee at the March 2010 meeting.

#### **3.4 Town Talk**

Notes and any actions arising from the last Town Talk, held on Tuesday 17<sup>TH</sup> November 2009, are attached as Appendix D.

#### **3.5 Rhythms of the World**

The accounts for ROTW 2009 have been circulated to members for consideration and to enable the Committee to decide the level of funding to be awarded to the Festival in 2010.

#### **3.6 Cadwell Lane/Hitchin Residents Alliance**

The updated Action Plan is attached as Appendix G. The next meeting will be held on Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> January, 2010.

#### **3.7 North Herts Minority Ethnic Forum**

There have been two Councillor's Surgeries at the North Herts Minority Ethnic Forum, with attendees of the NHMEF raising a number of issues of concern. Numbers attending have varied and discussions will take place re how often and when these surgeries should occur throughout the next year. Members will be advised of the outcome of these discussions and the dates identified.

#### **3.8 Westmill Steering Group**

Meetings with partners, residents and current Community Centre users continue with regard to the proposed new Community facility in John Barker Place. The next one takes place on Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> January 2010.

#### **3.9 Hitchin Work Plan**

The updated Hitchin Work Plan is attached as Appendix E.

#### **3.10 Councillors' engagement in Schools**

The Councillors' engagement in schools was again very successful with the young people raising a number of issues including previous matters raised at the last sessions eg lighting on Windmill Hill.

### **3.11 The Voice of Hitchin Youth**

The Voice are working on plans to have an anti smoking campaign primarily for young people under 16. This will coincide with national 'no smoking days' or similar national campaigns in Spring 2010.

They are also putting together a questionnaire for young people to enable them to identify projects/activities that young people are interested in.

One of the members of the Voice of Hitchin Youth is shadowing the Portfolio Holder for Waste and Recycling. This is a British Council initiative and the young person has found it very interesting and will along with her Voice colleagues give a presentation to the Committee at the March, 2010, meeting.

### **3.12 Youth Spend**

A number of applications for the Youth Spend have been received and the deadline for further applications is the 31<sup>st</sup> December 2009. The event takes place in Hitchin Town Hall on Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> January, 2010.

### **3.13 Highways Work Programme**

The updated Highways Work Programme is attached as Appendix F.

### **3.14 Charlton Society**

At the recent AGM of Charlton Society it was agreed to look at producing a Village Plan. A sub group has been formed to facilitate this. Work will begin in 2010.

## **4. FINANCE REPORT**

4.1 The budget sheets are attached as Appendix A.

## **5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 The Committee has delegated powers to administer funds from the budgets Described

5.2 There are no legal implications pertinent to this report.

## **6. FINANCIAL AND HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 There are no financial implications that have not been specified in the main body of the report.

## **7. CONSULTATION WITH EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS AND WARD MEMBERS**

7.1 Ward Members will be consulted about relevant grant applications.

7.2 Ward Members have been consulted in connection with projects that have been carried forward from previous years.

## **8. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 8.1 That the Committee endorses the actions taken by the Community Development Officer to promote greater community capacity and well-being.
- 8.2 That the Committee note the success of the Extended Swimming sessions in 2009 as set out in 3.3.
- 8.3 That the Committee endorse a similar initiative for the 2010 summer season.
- 8.4 That the Committee is asked to note the budgetary expenditure and balances carried forward from the Visioning, Development and Ward budgets.
- 8.5 That the Committee consider the level of funding to be awarded to the Rhythms of the World Festival 2010.
- 8.6 That the Committee allocate £1,000 to the Jump Project as set out in Appendix B.
- 8.7 That the Committee allocate £5,000 to the Mill fm Radio project in principle from the 2010/2011 budget as set out in Appendix C.

## **9. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 9.1 To ensure that the Committee are kept informed of the work of the Community Development Officer.
- 9.2 This report is intended simply to inform Members of the financial resources available to the Committee. It draws attention to the current budgetary situation, assists in the effective financial management of the Area Committee's budget and ensures actions are performed within the Authority's Financial Regulations and the guidance in the Grants procedure.
- 9.3 The awarding of financial assistance to voluntary organisations and the use of discretionary spending allows the Committee to further the aims and Strategic Objectives of the Council.

## **10. APPENDICES**

- 10.1 Appendix A – Annual Grant and Development Discretionary Budget Update
- 10.2 Appendix B – Jump Project Grant Application
- 10.3 Appendix C – Mill fm Radio Project Grant Application
- 10.4 Appendix D - Town Talk Notes 17<sup>th</sup> November 2009
- 10.5 Appendix E - Hitchin Committee Work Plan 2009 -2010
- 10.6 Appendix F – Highways Work Programme 2009/2010
- 10.7 Appendix G - Cadwell Lane/Hitchin Residents Alliance Action Plan

## **11. CONTACT OFFICERS**

- 11.1 Margaret Bracey, Community Development Officer. Ext: 4830.  
Email. [margaret.bracey@north-herts.gov.uk](mailto:margaret.bracey@north-herts.gov.uk)
- 11.2 Lois Stewart, Group Accountant. Ext: 4566.  
Email. [lois.stewart@north-herts.gov.uk](mailto:lois.stewart@north-herts.gov.uk)