

TITLE OF REPORT: CHAMPION NEWS AND FINANCE REPORT

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF POLICY AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

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.

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 School Surgeries**

The School Surgeries held in March 2011 raised a number of issues and views from the young people taking part. A 'teenager friendly space' was one of the matters raised and that recent endeavours in providing a youth focus venue might not have been successful, owing to the formalities that have to be put in that young people just want to 'hang out and not be made to do stuff'.

Issues with anti social behaviour at Bancroft on a Friday Night and King Georges re litter and graffiti were passed to the appropriate authorities.

Churchgate and the Town Hall were also discussed.

A major issue that young people felt strongly about, particularly from the Boys School, was the apparent 'special' treatment by local shops towards them when in school uniform. This has been addressed by the shops and an invitation to attend Shop Watch was given to some of the young people.

The School surgeries this term will take place the week beginning the 20th June 2011. Monday 20th in The Priory School, Tuesday 21st in Boys School and Wednesday 22nd in Girls School. Members are asked to make known their availability for any of these days.

3.2 North Herts Minority Ethnic Forum

A surgery at the North Herts Minority Ethnic Forum will have taken place on Friday 27th May, 2011 from 1.30pm – 2.30pm. It is hoped that by holding the surgery on a different day and later time may lead to an increase in attendance.

3.3 **Hitchin Street Angels**

The Hitchin Street Angels started their Town Centre specific work at the beginning of May, 2011. Their first night went very well operating with two teams and a representative from Bedford Angels on each team. They received positive comments from the public, the clubs and pub door stewards. They persuaded some young girls to make their way home and gave out bottled water and three pairs of flip flops.

They felt that they had learnt a lot from their first night and that the Street Angels will evolve to try and meet the needs of the night time community.

3.4 **The Bancroft Project/The Sanctuary**

The Community Development Officer met with the Manager and Deputy Manager of the Sanctuary to discuss possible links between the two organisations. As a result they are to attend future Bancroft Project meetings so that both organisations know what is available for the homeless in Hitchin and that they have the opportunity to work together in the provision of services.

The Bancroft Project has seen an increase in consumers of the Sunday lunches provided at Christchurch and attendances now average between 18 to 20 homeless every Sunday.

They are seeking funding from a variety of areas to help continue this work.

The Sanctuary is now in partnership with St Mungo's with a view to consolidate the future running of services available in Hitchin.

A new website has also been established www.northhertssanctuary.org.uk.

3.5 **Standhill Wood Spinney**

Residents of Standhill Road received funding from Highbury Ward Members for a restoration project at the Spinney. Advice was received from NHDC Grounds Maintenance section, Groundwork Herts and CMS. The local school was also involved.

3.6 **Timebank**

Timebank in Hitchin continues to grow. The Time Bank Co-ordinator has visited some of Hitchin's Community Centres to discuss the programme and how each centre may be able to assist, as well as establishing which groups currently using the Centres might be able to become included.

3.7 **Community Centres**

Members of the Management Committees of the various Community Centres in North Herts met in February, 2011. It was again deemed to be a very successful meeting where the attendees heard about a new generic building maintenance contract organised by the Authority, covering Building Health and Safety Compliance.

Each Centre has been invited to sign up to the contract at no extra cost, which was welcomed by representatives there and the contract began on April 1st 2011.

It was agreed that these meetings were very beneficial and should be held twice a year. The next one will be hosted by Royston Coombes Community Centre in Autumn 2011.

3.8 Oughton Children's Centre

At a recent Ofsted inspection at the Children's Centre they received all 'good' with one 'outstanding'. This excellent result confirms the significance and importance of the Children's Centre in the area and the work they do with local families.

3.9 Smartys Day Nursery

Smartys Day Nursery, which was managed through The Westmill Community Association, has now formed a new management committee and is seeking charity status as a Company Limited by Guarantee in order to continue the excellent work the Nursery does in providing day care to young children and their families locally on the estate and from other areas of Hitchin.

3.10 Westmill Community Association

Mick Furr, MBE, Manager of Westmill Community Centre, has decided to retire in September 2011. It will be difficult to find a replacement for Mick, who has been a community stalwart on the estate for a very long time. Work has started on replacing her and also to have a celebration in September thanking her for all her hard work and honouring her achievements.

3.11 CAYPOW (Children and Young People of Westmill)

A new club has started on Westmill run by a number of residents from the estate with the support of CAYPOW. Westmill Fun Club takes place on a Wednesday after school and on its first day attracted 20 young people. At the moment the fun club takes place in the Coffee Mill but if numbers increase it may have to move to the Community Centre. This is not only a very positive move in engaging more young people but also the wider community.

3.12 CHERISH

Cherish is a recently formed support group in Westmill, for young people with Cerebral Palsy and/or epilepsy and the group has received a fast tracked start up grant from the Hitchin Area Committee.

3.13 The Dell

Hitchin Allstar Choir are celebrating their 10th anniversary in June 2011 and are planning an informal celebration in The Dell. Discussions have taken place with officers from the Grounds Maintenance & Community Development and the organisers on the management of the event.

3.14 Hitchin Schools Fair

Discussions have been taking place on the planning and organisation of the first Hitchin Primary Schools Fair in the Town Centre on Saturday 16th July 2011. This will include nearly all of the Hitchin Primary Schools coming together for the first time to raise funds and promote their schools. If successful it is hoped that this will become another annual event in Hitchin's calendar.

3.15 Olympics 2012

Rotary in Hitchin are planning to organise a weekend event in Hitchin in 2012, prior to the Olympics, involving schools, sports clubs and other organisations in the town. The first meeting has taken place and more information will be reported back as the preparations proceed.

3.16 Diary Dates

14th June - Hitchin Festival box office opens
29th June - BID Annual Meeting
1st July – Hitchin Festival begins
9th and 10th July - Rhythms of the World
16th July – Hitchin Primary Schools Summer Fair

- 3.17 **Hitchin Area Work Programme**
The updated Hitchin Area Committee Work programme is attached as Appendix D.
- 3.18 **Highways Work Programme**
The updated Highways Work Programme is attached as Appendix E.

4. FINANCE REPORT

- 4.1 The Committee is asked to note the budgetary expenditure, balances and carry forwards from the Development Budgets and the Visioning Budgets
- 4.2 The Committee's updated Annual Grant and Development Discretionary Budget spreadsheet is attached as Appendix A.
- 4.3 The Committee is asked to consider a grant award of £1,160 to The Children Law Specialist Organisation in respect of work at North Herts Minority Ethnic Forum, to provide free legal advice to the local community on family and child matters to families who do not qualify for legal aid – Appendix B.
- 4.4 The Committee is asked to consider a grant award of £500 to The Hitchin Society to promote the 2011 Heritage Properties Open Day – Appendix C.

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 have been consulted on 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 is asked to note the budgetary expenditure and balances carried forward from the Visioning, Development and Ward budgets.
- 8.3 That the Committee consider the level of funding to be awarded to Children Law Specialist Organisation – Appendix B
- 8.4 That the Committee consider the level of funding to be awarded to The Hitchin Society – 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 – The Children Law Specialist Organisation
- 10.3 Appendix C – The Hitchin Society
- 10.4 Appendix D - Hitchin Area Committee Work Plan 2011/2012
- 10.5 Appendix E - Highways Work Programme 2011/2012

11. CONTACT OFFICERS

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