

**TITLE OF REPORT: GRANTS, GRANT APPLICATIONS & COMMUNITY UPDATE**

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF POLICY & COMMUNITY SERVICES

PORTFOLIO HOLDER: COUNCILLOR TONY HUNTER

**1. SUMMARY**

- 1.1 To advise the Committee on the current expenditure and balances of the Area Committee budgets.
- 1.2 To bring to the Committee's attention details of recent requests received for Area Committee Grant Funding made by community groups and local organisations.
- 1.3 To advise the Committee of the activities and schemes with which the Community Officer has been involved.
- 1.4 To bring to the Committee's attention some important community based activities that will take place during the next few months.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to note the budgetary expenditure, balances and carry forwards from the Development, Visioning and Ward Budgets as set out in Appendix A
- 2.2 The Committee considers grant funding of **£1,500** to Walsworth Festival Association towards the cost of their annual event on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2016 (as outlined in 8.1.1 Appendix B)
- 2.3 The Committee considers grant funding of **£1,040** to Mind in Mid Herts towards the cost of setting up a Hitchin mental health support group (as outlined in 8.1.2 Appendix C)
- 2.4 The Committee considers the allocation of £1500 (being the maximum the officer can recommend.) to Hitchin Senior Citizens Welfare Committee who are requesting **£2,655** towards room hire, transport, insurance costs and a coach trip. (as outlined in 8.1.3 Appendix D)
- 2.5 The Committee considers the reallocation of the outstanding amounts totalling £1063 from within the development budget as outlined in 7.5
- 2.6 That the Committee endorses the actions taken by the Community Officer to promote greater community capacity and well-being for Hitchin.

### **3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 To ensure the Committee is kept informed of the work of the Community Officer.
- 3.2 This report is intended 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, the Council's Constitution, and the guidance of the existing Grants policy.
- 3.3 The awarding of financial assistance to voluntary organisations and the use of discretionary spending allows the Committee to further the aims expressed in the 'Priorities for the District'.

### **4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 4.1 There are no alternative options being proposed other than those detailed within the text of this report. However in the course of debate at committee, Members may wish to comment and offer additional views on any of the items included within this report.

### **5. CONSULTATION WITH RELEVANT MEMBERS AND EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS**

- 5.1 Consultation with Members has occurred in connection with the allocation of funds for Community Projects
- 5.2 Consultation with the respective officers and external agencies/groups has taken place with regard to funding proposals for Area Committee Discretionary and Development Funds.

### **6. FORWARD PLAN**

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

### **7. BACKGROUND**

- 7.1 Members are asked to note the information detailed in Appendix A Area Committee Budget Spread sheet, which relates to the Area Committee budget balances for the end of the financial year 2015/16.
- 7.2 The spreadsheet also details pre-allocated sums carried forward from the previous financial years, including balances and past expenditure relating to the allocated and unallocated Area Capital Visioning Budgets available to the Committee.
- 7.3 The current level of unallocated funds within the Area Committee's 2015/16 Area Grant Budget is **£30,155**.

- 7.4 The Area Committee's 2014/15 Area Grant Budget is has now been fully committed.
- 7.5 Members are asked to reallocate the following outstanding amounts back to the development budget:
- Lighting Column for CCTV £439 – has been installed
  - Lighting Column for CCTV £61 - has been installed
  - Bench for Cloisters £522 - Project completed
  - Plaque for Bench £7 - Project completed
  - Dog bin at St Ippolyts\* £34 - Project completed

\*this was a historic agreement, as the authority no longer fund dog bins through area grants, due to the fact that additional installations increase the revenue burden of maintenance/emptying to the service area responsible.

## 8. PROJECT/ ACTIVITY/ SCHEME DETAILS

### 8.1 Grant Applications

#### 8.1.1 Walsworth Festival

This annual event has been held on Walsworth Common since the early 1970's. This year the festival is planned to take place on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2016. It provides the opportunity for the local community to get together and for local groups and charities to publicise their services and raise funds. The festival association organise entertainment for all ages in the 'arena' and local groups perform on a small performance area as well as in St Faiths Church across the road who also provide refreshments.

The total cost to the Walsworth Festival Association is approximately £4,000, the organisation estimate an income of £2,500 from the hire of stalls, concessions and selling programmes. They are requesting the shortfall of £1,500 for Hitchin Area Committee budget.

Members are advised that if they wish to fund, then any award should be 'up to £1500' in order to ensure there is no overpayment were the festival to cost less than anticipated.

(As outlined in recommendation 2.2, Appendix B)

#### 8.1.2 MIND in Mid Herts

Mind in Mid Herts support individuals who are suffering or who have suffered from mental and emotional distress. They are planning to extend their services to cover Hitchin by running a weekly group based at Christchurch on Bedford Road Hitchin. At present the service can only be accessed by travelling to the Mind in Mid Herts Wellbeing Centre in Stevenage. The group are seeking £1,040 to pay for the meeting room in Christchurch on Monday afternoons for 2 hours per week at £10 per hour for 12 months.

This outreach project servicing the community of Hitchin will promote social opportunities, provide facilities for early intervention, provide effective support for groups and individuals with mental health issues and support carers.

Mind in Mid Herts work in partnership with organisations such as Herts Mind Network, Social Services and the NHS. (As outlined in recommendation 2.3, Appendix C)

### 8.1.3 Hitchin Senior Citizens

The Hitchin Senior Citizens Welfare Association currently operates a friendship and lunch club and a strength and stability class for those aged 65 and over. They use Hitchin Helping Hands mini-bus to provide transport to the Westmill Community Centre for those that need it.

They currently have 103 members who pay a small annual subscription and participants of the strength and stability class pay a donation towards the tutor fees.

The organisation is requesting £2,655 towards the £4,299 cost of room hire, transport and insurance for their activities over the coming year including £500 for a coach outing. The remainder £2,147 will be covered from the income raised by annual subscription and class fees.

The groups attract older people from across Hitchin. The activities they provide assist in improving both the physical and mental health of older residents, combating social isolation and preventing falls. The Association has been providing activities for older residents since the 1950's when it first started in Bancroft Hall but the Association has been formally in existence since 1974 entirely run by volunteers from the local community. (As outlined in recommendation 2.4, Appendix D)

## 8.2 **Update on previous grants awarded**

### 8.2.1 Child UK Youth Outreach

The project started as originally planned at the Swinburne Park, with an American theme of inclusive multi-sport, such as American tag football, baseball and ultimate Frisbee. Due to the timing of the project starting in the summer holidays, the project commenced with 4/5 young members. However, as the word spread throughout Westmill, it was identified via consultation with the young people that Swinburne Park was not easily accessible for young members to get to. It was therefore suggested that they play at the Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) at John Barker Place.

Following this relocation in September the numbers went up to 12-15 young members. Their interest grew in Street Soccer but due to poor light or lack of floodlighting at the MUGA the organiser tried to acquire portable lights in order to sustain the time slot. However there were some teething problems with the lighting. Subsequently, the group moved the project and linked it up with the Priory School indoor gym, where they currently have approximately 20-25 young members attending. This move necessitated further expenditure on venue hire, but it has proved beneficial proven by the positive impact it has made with the young people. Twelve of the young members represented Westmill at the Baldock Arena football tournament in partnership with Hitchin Town FC and Youth Connexions.

Child UK has now completed 14 weeks delivering a variety of unique multisport activities, which have been chosen by the young people. The project will concluded at the end of 2015 however further funding is hoped to be found in order to continue the project into 2016.

Location	Date	No. Participants
SWINBURNE PARK	31st JULY, 2015	4
SWINBURNE PARK	7th AUGUST, 2015	5
SWINBURNE PARK	14th AUGUST, 2015	7
SWINBURNE PARK	21st AUGUST, 2015	8
SWINBURNE PARK	28th AUGUST, 2015	8
JOHN BARKER MUGA	4th SEPTEMBER, 2015	11
JOHN BARKER MUGA	11th SEPTEMBER, 2015	15
JOHN BARKER MUGA	18th SEPTEMBER, 2015	18
PRIORY SCHOOL	25th SEPTEMBER	22
PRIORY SCHOOL	2nd OCTOBER	25
PRIORY SCHOOL	9th OCTOBER	21
PRIORY SCHOOL	16th OCTOBER	18
PRIORY SCHOOL	23rd OCTOBER	23
PRIORY SCHOOL	30th OCTOBER	20

#### 8.2.2 Bancroft Homeless Project

The Project have decided to be proactive in regard to the move from Bancroft Hall. Rather than wait for a firm date to vacate the the venue in order for it to be demolished (as agreed by the Council's Cabinet, at such time as the new facility at Hitchin Town Hall re-opens) they have decided to seek alternative arrangements.

Manny's Café based in Hitchin Market, gave them a 2.30 – 3.30 pm slot on Sunday 13th and for their Christmas meal on Sunday 20th, and possibly after. It is hoped that this might turn into a permanent arrangement, the arrangement being seen as an opportunity for both parties to ascertain if this is suitable in the longer term. This arrangement has been trialled as a one off emergency measure in the past and as it worked quite well it was felt they would pilot a few more sessions. Manny's Café are charging £4 per head for up to 20 meals, but there is no need to pay for a venue, so that is £80 total.

This equates to only £5 more than it cost to run the project at Bancroft Hall, which was £35 rent and roughly £40 for the food. The organiser has been quite unwell lately and is waiting for a hospital appointment for further tests, so she is welcoming the chance to give up the food buying, preparation and serving for a while.

Attempts to recruit more volunteers have been unsuccessful so far, therefore this provides another good reason for trying this for now. Transferring the project to Manny's Café also allows for the organiser to spend more of her resources supporting the homeless people in all the other ways she does. She is a familiar figure and someone they all trust and respect.

North Hertfordshire District Council has been informed and the Bancroft Hall rental cancelled.

### 8.2.3 Hitchin Festival Update

There were about 130 events, similar to 2014, advertised in the programme containing a mix of new events and old favourites. Several schools and villages put on events, taking advantage of the Festival publicity. As usual there were many talks and musical events. The value of ticket sales was down from £21,000 in 2014 to £15,000 this year. Sadly the numbers attending the Schools in Concert was also reduced.

The current directors have recruited younger people, who have relevant experience which has produced several new initiatives to increase the popularity of the Festival.

The established events, such as The Anthony Slinn art lecture and the Town Guided Walks were fully booked. Charlton and Ickleford, took advantage of the Festival publicity to run local events.

Musical events are ever popular, with over 30 events. Schools in Concert, held in St Marys whilst the Town Hall is being upgraded had a reduced participation of schools for a variety of reasons. This follows two years of record participation. Food and wine events were well attended, with the Victoria running several events. Purwell School ran its own Food Festival. Reduced ticket sales through the box office were thought to be due to a number of factors. Average ticket price was lower, there were more free events and more tickets were sold at the door and not through the box office.

The Festival Committee instigated several new initiatives in 2015 with the recruitment of new volunteer advisors; Glyn Doggett, who is a Hitchin-born actor and producer who has worked in Theatre since 2003. Locally his involvement in the arts has seen him managing and performing at the Market Theatre on Sun Street and also co-running and hosting the popular Mostly Comedy club at a number of local venues as well as in London and Edinburgh. Through his knowledge and experience of the arts locally and his experience in a variety of areas of the entertainment industry he is hoping he can help to bring some useful ideas to an already great festival.

Tim Wheeler; is a local radio producer and presenter who grew up in and has recently moved back to Hitchin. He has experience covering community stories and has a good understanding of how social media might be used to present the festival as a coherent set of events - the story of which will be told with colourful pictures and videos. He also hopes that better use of social media will engage younger people with the festival.

A result of these new advisors has generated some useful suggestions:

2015 felt like the first steps forward for the festival to try and open it up to a wider and potentially younger audience. There was a much-improved programme available with added map to try and tie up all the events and give a real sense of community to what was on offer.

The Festival Committee are investigating a web-based ticket booking system to make ticket purchasing easier for 2016.

A major launch event in the Town Hall is being planned to improve publicity. They are also investigating the possibility of a family fun day with events and shows for a much younger audience to really try and make it a festival for all ages.

On social media a new Twitter account will be created soon and refreshed regularly during the Festival in 2016 to encourage interest and Facebook will also help as a way of promoting for free.

In anticipation of expenditure on some of these initiatives the committee are working to reduce overheads. They have introduced more advertising in the Programme to defray the cost of a print run of about 1200.

#### 8.2.4 Clean Up Hitchin Update

Clean Up Hitchin has been working in partnership with both the North Hertfordshire District Council's Grounds Maintenance Service Manager and the Waste Contracts Manager and have complemented them on their helpfulness. The group organiser and NHDC Officers are in regular dialogue; they met in order to conduct a walkabout in Hitchin and prioritised the replacing of a number of tulip bins around St Mary's and on Windmill Hill. The new bins have a better aesthetic appearance and are designed so that the wind and local wild life can not pull litter out of them.

The Waste Contracts Manager has secured a number of redundant bin shells for the projects, one of which is with Hitchin Hackspace being turned into a 'Binbot'. Others will be used for an art 'Binstallation' in the summer which the officer has committed to support practically. The Clean Up Hitchin team also used spray chalk to draw attention to the new recycling bins in town which officers support as one way of delivering the message next year as opposed to 'reverse graffiti'.

Peachy Creative has provided Clean Up Hitchin with a first draft of a logo and some copy for the campaign. The Priory School have agreed to help the group to shape their educational resources and deliver them peer-to-peer. They are prioritising the secondary schools as they are much more likely a source of some of the litter around town.

Some positive scope creep has happened very recently with St Mary's Garden of Rest. The group were previously considering some 'guerrilla gardening' to make the space look well cared for, testing the research that says 'a place that embraces community and looks loved, tends to be less littered'. Clean Up Hitchin have secured Revd. Michael Roden's support and engaged Groundwork Hertfordshire to establish the feasibility of transforming the garden into a community / church garden / play area / seating space. The group intend to apply to a Community Grant Scheme run by Tesco towards this project.

#### 8.3 **Hitchin Committee Project monitoring chart**

At the request of the Chairman of the Hitchin Area Committee, and in order for the Committee to monitor progress on projects and issues, an appendix has been included for information which outlines each issue / project and lists the previous update, the current update and the department responsible.  
(As outlined in Appendix F)

#### 8.4 **Highways Matters**

It was agreed that a section entitled 'Highways Matters' be included within the Area Grant applications, and community update Report, for each committee cycle to facilitate debate and enable appropriate feedback on any of the proposed or listed schemes.

Any new proposals will be forwarded to the respective Herts County Councillor for consideration, who will in turn report back and advise the Committee accordingly.

### 9. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 The Terms of Reference in relation to Area Committees confirm that they may establish and maintain relationships with outside bodies/voluntary organisations which include discretionary grant aid/financial support. The Committee has delegated powers, as a body, to administer funds from the budgets described. However, this does not include grants for district wide activities.

- 9.2 Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 provides a General Power of Competence which gives local authorities the power to do anything that individuals generally may do for the benefit of the authority, its area or persons resident in its area.
- 9.3 Section 137 Local Government Act 1972 provides specific authority for the Council to incur expenditure on anything which is in the interests of and will bring direct benefit to its area. This includes a charity or other body operating for public service

## **10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1 In the past few years there has been no inflationary allowance to the main Area Committee Budget and the 2015/16 baseline budget has stayed the same as the previous year.
- 10.2 Appendix A provides the detailed budget end of year for 2015/16 position for the Committee.

## **11. RISK IMPLICATIONS**

- 11.1 There are no relevant risk entries that have been recorded on Covalent, the Council's Performance & Risk system. Individual events should have their own risk assessments in place to mitigate any health and safety issues. There are no pertinent risk implications for the Authority associated with any items within this report.

## **12. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 12.1 The Equality Act 2010 came into force on the 1<sup>st</sup> October 2010, a major piece of legislation. The Act also created a new Public Sector Equality Duty, which came into force on the 5<sup>th</sup> April 2011. There is a General duty, described in 12.2, that public bodies must meet, underpinned by more specific duties which are designed to help meet them.
- 12.2 In line with the Public Sector Equality Duty, public bodies must, in the exercise of its functions, give due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- 12.3 The projects which comprise the Community Officers' workload, and area committee funding assigned to community projects are assessed to ensure that they are as inclusive as possible to members of the local community. The only deviation to this is where a minority group may specifically receive funding or allocation of resources to address a particular area of need or 'gap' in provision.

## **13. SOCIAL VALUE IMPLICATIONS**

- 13.1 As the recommendations made in this report do not constitute a public service contract, the measurement of 'social value' as required by the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 need not be applied, although equalities implications and opportunities are identified in the relevant section at paragraphs 12.



## **14. HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 14.1 There are no pertinent Human Resource implications associated with any items within this report

## **15. APPENDICES**

- 15.1 Appendix A Hitchin Area Committee Budget Report for 2015/16
- 15.2 Appendix B Walsworth Festival Association – Grant Report
- 15.3 Appendix C Mind in Mid Herts – Grant Report
- 15.4 Appendix D Hitchin Senior Citizens Welfare Committee - Grant Report
- 15.5 Appendix E HAC Monitoring Chart

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## **17. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 17.1 Review of Policies and Procedures for Financial Assistance to Voluntary and Community Organisations, November 2002.