

**LETCHWORTH AREA COMMITTEE**  
**16 JANUARY 2013**

**\*PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT**

**AGENDA ITEM No.**

**6**

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

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF POLICY & COMMUNITY SERVICES

**1. SUMMARY**

- 1.1 To advise the Committee on the current expenditure and balances of the Area Committee delegated budgets.
- 1.2 To bring to the Committee's attention details of recent requests received for Area Committee Development Discretionary Grant Funding made by community groups and local organisations.
- 1.3 To advise the Committee of the activities and schemes with which the Community Development 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 Budgets and Visioning Budgets as set out in Appendix 1.**

**Summary of funds currently available to the Committee**

Capital Visioning Budget - £6,601

Funds carried forward, (*now transferred to the base budget*) - £2,948

Unallocated 2012/13 Funds - £24,829

- 2.2 **That the Committee endorses the actions taken by the Community Development Officer to promote greater community capacity and well-being for Letchworth Garden City.**

**2.3 GRANT FUNDING DECISIONS TO BE MADE / CONSIDERED**

**2.3.1 Jackmans Funday**

Following the success of this event in 2012, the Funday Steering group is in the process of planning the event for May 18<sup>th</sup> 2013. They have some funds that were raised at last year's event and continue to raise funds via events held at the Community Centre. They have received £400 from the HCC Locality Fund and have also made an application for grant funding of £700 to LGCHF. They are requesting £1,000 from the Letchworth Area Committee Budget to cover hiring the staging, licences and printing costs.

The Jackmans Funday is a very important event for the local community and that part of the Garden City. The Ivel Court Centre over the past few years has been considered in a number of redevelopment plans that unfortunately never proceeded and the Funday provides the local community a chance to get together and vitalise both the Centre and those living and working in the neighbourhood. It also provides much needed information about the amenities available in the area that are often overlooked, even by those who live there. These include the Community Centre, local groups and clubs, churches, children's centre and the newly launched Garden City Academy.

**It is recommended that the Committee considers a grant request of £1,000 to the Jackmans Funday to cover the cost of staging, performance licences and printing publicity material.**

### 2.3.2 Garden City Samba

The group are aiming to attract new members to increase the number of performances, and give the group a stronger presence within the local community. They are applying for a grant of £485 towards providing subsidised weather-appropriate costumes for those members who receive concessions.

Currently they have 18 members in the group, of which 10 pay full rate and 8 pay a concessionary rate.

They are also applying for grant funding of £540 from the Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation and have been discussing the idea of sponsored and subsidised places within the group. They have requested funding to cover the cost of a 10-week block of classes for 12 new members. This would enable them to offer a free place to those on the concessionary rate and a subsidised place for those on the full rate.

The classes are open to everyone, regardless of musical experience, age, social or economic background. They actively seek to engage the hardest to reach people within the community and those from a disadvantaged backgrounds.

Brazilian carnival drumming is a vibrant, energetic and uplifting style of music and the group perform frequently at local events to generate a feel-good factor within the town. By performing further a field they can bring benefits to more people and promote Letchworth Garden City in the wider community.

**It is recommended that the Committee considers a grant request of £485 towards the cost of purchasing weather appropriate costumes for those group members who receive concessionary rate.**

### 2.3.3 2013 Letchworth Festival Steering Committee

The group are applying for £2,000 grant funding which is split into two distinct areas. £1,500 to put on the Proms In the Park event, which is a day of music and dance provided by local schools and music groups. This event has proved very popular in previous years attracting an audience of approximately 500 people from the local community. In addition the group are requesting £500 to provide support to individual groups who want to put on their own events in order to promote their activities during the Festival Fortnight.

The Letchworth Festival Steering Committee are in the process of applying for funding to cover other aspects of the two week programme of events in the Town. They are requesting £4,000 from LGCHF, £2,000 from the Garden Square Shopping Centre and £1,000 from HCC Member Locality Budget. They will also be utilising some reserves remaining from the 2012 Festival.

**It is recommended that the Committee considers a grant request of £1,500 to help support the 2013 Letchworth Festival.**

#### **2.3.4 Growing People**

Growing People provide horticultural therapy for people with mental health problems and use gardening to promote wellbeing and positive mental health. Based at the Letchworth Centre for Healthy Living, they are requesting £1,000 of grant funding to cover the cost of developing a website for the group.

The project was originally set up in 2006 as part of the Letchworth Centre for Healthy Living and were promoted via their Website. In August 2012 they set up as an independent charity, with their own constitution and bank account.

For people with mental health problems, leaving the safety of their home and getting outside their own front door can be a major barrier to receiving the help they need. An accessible, friendly website provides a stepping stone to enable potential project users to learn about the help that Growing People offer. The website would also provide information for families, carers and professionals looking for appropriate services, post hints and tips for gardeners in the wider community and linked to social media and on line giving facilities.

**It is recommended that the Committee considers grant funding of £1,000 to Growing People for the design and hosting of a website.**

#### **2.3.5 Fenners Group**

The Fenners Group consist of a group of 8 Artists who have studios in the Fenners Building. The building on Openshaw Way is run by the Digswell Arts Trust in order to provide studio space for local artisans and crafts people. The Group of eight artists are planning a two week project to bring free arts workshops to young people in Letchworth over the two week period from 10<sup>th</sup> to the 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2013. Workshops will take place both at the Fenners Building and in local primary and secondary schools. They aim to provide for 600 participants over the two week period. The group are keen to engage young people who would normally not have access to this provision and are requesting £2,847 grant funding in order to ensure that they are able to provide all workshops free of charge. Funding from the Letchworth Area Committee if approved would also cover publicity, materials, refreshments and hiring a small marquee to provide shelter for outdoor workshops.

This project will provide workshops across a wide range of activities, including ceramics, glass, painting, drawing, sculpture, printing, felt making, musical instrument making, book making and art therapy. The project will help young people to discover new skills and build self esteem. It will also promote the work and activities available at the Fenner Building helping the artists based there to engage with the local community.

The group will also be applying to LGCHF for £5,375 to cover staffing costs. They will also be approaching County Councillors for grant awards from their Locality Budgets.

**It is recommended that the Committee considers a grant request of £1,500 to go towards publicity, materials, refreshments and hiring a small marquee to provide shelter for outdoor workshops as part of a two week arts project organised by the Fenners Group.**

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

- 3.1 To ensure the Committee is kept informed of the work of the Community Development 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 and the guidance in the Grants procedure.
- 3.3 The awarding of financial assistance to voluntary organisations and the use of discretionary spending allows the Committee to further the aims and Strategic Priorities of the Council.
- 3.4 Production of this report is a requirement of the Corporate Plan in which the Community Development Officer is required to produce a formal report to the Area Committee 6 occasions per annum in line with the Civic Calendar.

### **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 raised within this report.

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

- 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 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 Spreadsheet, which relates to the Area Committee budget balances for the current financial year 2012/13.
- 7.2 The spreadsheet also details pre-allocated sums carried forward from the previous financial year 2011/12 including balances and past expenditure relating to the allocated and un-allocated Area Capital Visioning Budgets available to the Committee.
- 7.3 The current level of unallocated funds within the Committee's Central Area Grant Budget is £24,829

## **8. PROJECT/ ACTIVITY/ SCHEME DETAILS**

### **8.1 Letchworth Festival Fortnight**

The planning stages for the 2013 Letchworth Festival Fortnight is currently underway. There have been issues with the leadership of the committee and the newly elected chair and secretary have had to stand down following personal issues. Ann Pegrum the former Chair has temporarily stepped in until the new year and the group are currently recruiting volunteers to cover these roles and help out generally with the festival.

### **8.2 Letchworth In Bloom**

The Letchworth In Bloom Action team are in the process of agreeing the local projects and areas to be included for 'special awards' in their entry for Anglia In Bloom. These will include, Howard Park, Howard Gardens, Pixmore Roundabout, Sollershott Roundabout and Norton Common. The Action Team included representatives from the local community, local businesses, schools and officers from both NHDC and the Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation.

### **8.3 Jackmans Residents Groups**

The Jackmans Improvement Group, have formally been disbanded and their bank account closed. They had been inactive for several years. However, a new residents group called 'Hand In Hand' is presently being formed. Initiated by residents based in the Hadleigh retirement living scheme, they are in the process of promoting themselves and generating interest from the local community.

### **8.4 Box Cleve Project**

Box Cleve is a youth project aimed at young people aged between 8 and 13 years old who may be at risk of offending. The project is being run in partnership with local schools, NHDC, North Herts Homes, Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation and the lead agency is the Fire Service.

Young people will be trained in non-contact boxing skills and provided with positive role models, information on healthy eating and encouraged to live an active and healthy lifestyle.

The project is being funded with 50% grant funding provided by the Fire Service and the remaining 50% split equally between the NH Joint Action Group, North Herts Homes and the LGCHF.

The project's intended start date is 6<sup>th</sup> February 2013 at The Letchworth Garden City Academy. The committee are currently putting together referral details and obtaining the required equipment. Referral forms for agencies will be distributed just before and again after Christmas 2012.

### **8.5 K Entertainers Christmas Events**

Community Development Officers from Letchworth and Hitchin attended one of the K Entertainers Christmas events in order to undertake an evaluation of the project.

On the evening in question, approximately 140 older people attended. Transport was provided to bring them from both retirement living schemes, care and nursing homes across the district. These events were held on 4 consecutive nights and participants were treated to a Christmas dinner and live entertainment provided by the volunteers.

The volunteers work for many months on planning and rehearsing for these shows. The audience thoroughly enjoyed their evening.

**8.6 Cortex Christmas Day Event**

Cortex Transgender group are working in partnership with Cheap as Chips and the Howard Garden Social Centre to organise a Christmas Day event for any Letchworth Resident who would otherwise be spending the holiday alone. They are providing a Christmas dinner and buffet in the afternoon on 25<sup>th</sup> December with games, entertainment and activities all provided at the Howard Garden Social Centre.

£115 has been provided by the Area Committee as a fast track grant to cover the cost of disposable table wear and the hire of the Centre. The project has also received funds from the Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation, the Civic Trust and from their own fundraising efforts throughout the year.

**8.7 Councillors Surgeries**

Surgeries and Area Committee meetings have been advertised in the Winter edition of the NHDC Outlook Magazine, to inform residents on some of the ways they are able to engage with their local councillor. The surgeries are also publicised in the Comet's Town & Around pages, promoted by the Love Letchworth Facebook Site and the Tourist Information Office. Posters are displayed in the town centre promoting the dates of the Community Surgeries. All of these forms of publicity are at no cost, no press advertisements are paid for.

Dates for future Surgeries: 16th February, 16th March, 20th April and 18th May 2013.

**8.8 Highways Matters**

It is proposed that a section entitled ' Highways Matters ' is included within the Area Champion's News 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 includes discretionary grant aid/financial support. However, this does not include grants for district wide activities.

9.2 Section 2 Local Government Act 2000 provides that the Council has power to do anything which it considers likely to promote or improve the economic, social or environmental well-being of its area. This would apply on the basis that financial assistance to voluntary and community organisations improves the economic, social or environmental well-being of the District or part of it.

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.

9.4 The Committee has delegated powers to administer funds from the budgets described.

## **10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1 In the past few years there has been no inflationary allowance to the main Area Committee Budget and the 2012/13 baseline budget has stayed the same as the previous year.
- 10.2 The former MoU Budget is subject to a 7.1% reduction each year through to financial year 2015/16.

## **11. RISK IMPLICATIONS**

- 11.1 There are no 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 Development 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 1 Area Committee Budget Report 2012 – 13
- 15.2 Appendix 2 Jackmans Funday Grant Report
- 15.3 Appendix 3 Garden City Samba Grant Report
- 15.4 Appendix 4 Letchworth Festival Grant Report
- 15.5 Appendix 5 Growing People Grant Report
- 15.6 Appendix 6 Fenners Group Grant Report
- 15.7 Appendix 7 Area Committee Work Programme 2013

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## **17. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

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