

**LETCWORTH AREA COMMITTEE**  
**13 MARCH 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 of this report.

**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 - £15,994

- 2.2 The Committee considers grant funding of £300 to the Young People of the Year Award scheme (YOPEY) towards the costs of working in local schools. The project is outlined in further detail at Paragraph 8.1 and Appendix 3.
- 2.3 That the Committee considers grant a funding request of £8,000 from the Letchworth Town Centre Partnership towards the cost of three major town centre events throughout the year as outlined at Paragraph 8.2 and Appendix 4.
- 2.4 That the Committee considers grant funding of £1,500 to the Letchworth Great War Project towards the cost of developing a website for the project as outlined at Paragraph 8.3 and Appendix 5.

- 2.5 That the Committee considers a grant funding request of £3,173 from the New Youth Foundation Workshop towards the setting up of a project to provide performance art workshops for young people at the Jackmans Community Centre as outlined at Paragraph 8.4 and Appendix 6.
- 2.6 That the Committee considers grant funding of £798 to Cortex towards hall hire and public liability costs as outlined at Paragraph 8.5 and Appendix 7.
- 2.7 That the Committee agrees that the conditions placed on the grant funding awarded to Growing People at the meeting held on 16 January 2013 have been met and following consultation with members the funds be released.
- 2.8 That the Committee endorses the actions taken by the Community Development Officer to promote greater community capacity and well-being for Letchworth Garden City.

### **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 1 - 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 £15,994

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

### **8.1 Young People of the Year Award (Yopey)**

Young People of the Year Award is a Hertfordshire wide campaign that aims to improve the image of young people in the media and by society as a whole. Rewarding the good work that many young people carry out provides positive role models for others and improves the public perception of Youth.

The organisers work closely with Letchworth Schools, Highfield and Fearnhill to encourage young people to take part in voluntary activities, help others and improve the lives of people around them. The organisation is requesting £300.00 of grant funding towards providing sessions in Schools.

The organisation is applying to all five NHDC Area Committees and requesting £300 from each. They have also gained sponsorship from businesses such as Johnson Matthey, Tesco, Runwood Homes, Mitsubishi Electric and in kind contributions from the University of Hertfordshire and Elstree Studios. They have also been successful in gaining funding from other local authorities within Hertfordshire. This sponsorship will contribute to the project as a whole, which covers the entire county and culminates in a prestigious awards ceremony to be held in either Elstree or Hatfield.

### **8.2 Letchworth Town Centre Partnership**

The Partnership is applying for grant funding for each of the three major events planned to take place in the Town Centre over the year culminating in a total of £8,000 funding requested.

The first event will be the Food Festival on 18th & 19th May, the second will be the Street Fest on June 8th and finally the Christmas Light Switch on event planned for 21st November. The funding will be used to enable the partnership to create a strong marketing outreach campaign for all three events that will help build a sense of anticipation and capture people's imaginations both locally and regionally and encourage visitors to the town.

Retailers will benefit from the increased footfall and dwell time that town centre events generate with many reporting new customers through their doors and increased sales at key events in 2012. Footfall counters showed that shopper and visitor numbers increase on the days that free events are being held. Strong publicity campaigns for each of these events should help reposition Letchworth as a vibrant lively town within the region benefiting not just the town centre but residents and visitors alike.

The events attract significant PR and resident engagement. NHDC will be clearly identified as one of the events sponsors / supporters and subsequently this will demonstrate to the public the Authority's commitment to the town's wellbeing. The events are unique in being large scale, completely free and open to all to enjoy. Two of the events actively encourage community groups to showcase their work and perform to considerable audience size which in turn allows them to build awareness, membership and become self sustaining.

The Partnership is committed to working with other community groups to develop the offer and also to promote the activities through the community groups channels further developing the clear link between NHDC and Love Letchworth.

The events will be match funded via sponsorship from local business, North Herts College and Garden Square Shopping Centre and grant funding from Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation.

### 8.3 **Letchworth Great War Project**

The Letchworth Great War Project is applying for £1,500 grant funding towards the cost of setting up a website in order for the community to engage fully.

This project will be unique to the region in terms of both diversity and the scale of community involvement. The main project 'hub' will take the form of an interactive museum to be based in a current vacant unit in Letchworth town centre covering a wide range of interesting topics both at home and abroad during the 1914-1919 period.

The exhibition will open on 5<sup>th</sup> August 2014 (100 years to the day that Britain joined the First World War). The exhibition space itself will act as a 'hub' for various events and activities that will take place in the area over the following year. It will run in 'real-time' i.e. mirroring the events of 100 years before day-by-day.

They will be exhibiting objects of both local and national importance, loaned from national and county museums that help tell the story of the area in WW1. They will also provide interactive sand-table displays depicting different military events on the Western Front in 'real-time'. A research area comprising of Microfilm readers, PC's and original documents will be available for public use.

The group will also utilise social media such as Facebook and Twitter in line with the 'real-time' concept of the project, to release information 100 years ago as it happened and to publish historical documents such as the 'Hertfordshire Regiment War diary', charting the day to day events of the Regiment on the Western Front. By employing this 'real-time' method, they aim to make both the interactive and physical exhibitions a place which will encourage returning visitors, with the promise of new information each time and an ever changing display that captivates the imagination.

The project in its 'physical' form will close on 5<sup>th</sup> August 2015 at the town centre vacant unit in Letchworth Garden City.

It is planned to maintain a website detailing the information collected and produced as a valuable resource to local schools, groups and the general public who wish to learn more about the area and its diverse wartime history.

The group will be working with many museums in Hertfordshire and will 'tour' the physical exhibition in part or in its entirety from 2015 until 2017 at various locations throughout the county including the summer of 2017 at the newly opened North Herts Museum based in Hitchin.

The project as a whole will be funded through a combination of local and National charitable funding programmes and grants. The Heritage Lottery Fund and Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation are key backers in both financial and logistical support.

The Letchworth Great War Project is a grand design, larger than any other project in the region, and will form a flagship for remembrance throughout the country. With extensive detailed plans and excellent local support, it is hoped that Letchworth, North Herts and the county as a whole will be able to be proud of such a worthwhile project and of course, keep in sight the overall aim; remembrance and commemoration of the sacrifice made by the United Kingdom in the Great War of 1914-1919.

#### **8.4 New Youth Foundation Workshop**

The group are applying for £3,173 grant funding towards a performing arts project for young people and children based in the Jackmans Community Centre. This group has been formed to provide a much needed activity for children and young people on the Jackmans Estate. Initiated by a local family and using their existing skills in the area of music, dance and the arts.

The group has been established following a proven need for constructive workshops aimed at this age group in the area. Through learning a performance art the young people are enabled and the project aims to increase self esteem and confidence.

This project is a good example of a community lead initiative and support of this group will enable and capacity build a positive future for the young people who take part.

The group are also applying to other agencies for grant funding, such as the Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation. They are also involved in fundraising activities as well as performing locally to raise funds for equipment.

As this is a new project they are starting from scratch and presently require funds to cover start up costs, including six months Hall Hire, stationery, publicity costs and equipment.

Part of the grant application is for £1,600 to purchase a PA system. If the members of the area committee are minded, it is suggested that this purchase would be of the most immediate need.

#### **8.5 Cortex**

The Cortex Transgender Group based at Howard Garden Social Centre are applying for £798 towards the cost of their hall hire and public liability insurance.

The group provide a drop in service and support for transgender people. They organise outings, holidays and provide outreach to inform the community about transgender issues. Their service helps to break down barriers by educating the general public and combating discrimination and ignorance. They also provide valuable support to those who are going through the transgender journey at any stage.

#### **8.6 North Herts. Bowls Club (Letchworth)**

To celebrate the club's 50th anniversary they have been invited to play the royal house hold team in the grounds of Windsor Castle in April.

The Club were awarded £350 as a fast track grant, using the Chair's inter regnum powers, in order to subsidise the cost of the outing per head to their members. The Club received a further £350 from the Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation and the remainder of the cost will be covered from member's contributions. 40 members have been invited to attend and they will pay £7 each.

### 8.7 **Rotary Club of Letchworth Garden City**

The Club are organising a community event called the Big Lunch on Sunday 2nd June in Howard Park. The event will comprise of two key elements, food and entertainment. The food will be 'bring your own picnic' but supplemented by a BBQ, refreshments, ice cream, whilst entertainment will be in the form of music, classic cars and traditional games. To make this a success, the club need to publicise the day adequately to the residents of Letchworth. This will take the form of posters, leaflets, and local press advertising.

Rotary Club of Letchworth Garden City are acting as facilitators in organising this Big Lunch Event for the community of Letchworth. By supporting this club financially, NHDC will be supporting a community event with the aim of uniting the Town. This is part of a National Big Lunch event and was organised last year for the Town by the Rotary Club of Letchworth Garden City and the Town Centre Partnership. Although the weather was poor, several hundred people turned out to make the day a success. This year it is hoped with some good weather to attract many more local families.

The cost of publicising and putting on the event calculates to £750. The Club have applied to LGCHF for £250 and a fast track grant of £500 has been agreed by the Letchworth Area Committee Chair under his inter-regnum powers.

### 8.8 **Wilbury Project**

A local resident has initiated meetings between local stakeholders and residents to examine ways in which the local community might be able to start up projects to help themselves to improve the estate. Representatives from local schools, churches, youth clubs, Council Officers and representatives from the Heritage Foundation are to meet in St Thomas' Hall on Bedford Road on 28<sup>th</sup> February to discuss ideas to set up projects and initiatives.

### 8.9 **Mrs Elizabeth Howard Memorial Hall Update**

At the Letchworth Area Committee meeting held on Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> January members requested an update of activities and bookings taking place at Mrs Howard Hall. Outlined below is the response provided by the Hall Manager.

There are currently approximately thirty groups that use the Memorial Hall on a regular basis delivering a range of services for the local community. On top of this there are numerous individual hirers for events, parties, celebration's, etc. The hall currently hires rooms to a range of groups from a less than 12 month baby group to an Alzheimer's Society led project called "Singing for the brain" and a whole host of diverse groups and services in between.

As well as the groups that hire there are two resident groups that are essentially tenant organisations, these are New Life Church and Choice. The Memorial Hall is also home to Funzone, a before and after school care service for children. Although Funzone is a hirer, it is seen as being similar to the other tenant organisations due to long term hiring of the hall. The hall is managed by the Letchworth Garden City Community Group (LGCCG) which includes members from the organisations above and the friends of the Memorial Hall. The management committee is further supported by NHDC with the inclusion of their Facilities Manager.

The hall has three large hireable rooms (main hall, upper hall and the NLC room) and a variety of smaller offices and two further meeting rooms that local organisations can hire. There is an IT suite that has recently been upgraded and is used by the local college to deliver IT Courses. The diversity of the rooms means that LGCCG can cater for up to 90 people in the main hall through to a one on one counselling in the smallest room. The Memorial Hall is operational between 8.00am - 12.00pm and is operational seven days a week. A full time hall manger is employed to oversee the day to day management of the hall.

There are three different rates for hiring (charitable, private and commercial) depending on the type of organisation you are or the type of event that is facilitated. The Memorial Hall has a strong identity in Letchworth and users comment that it has warm and welcoming environment. The hall does extremely little in the way of advertising and most business is generated by repeat custom or through endorsement through users. The recent improvements of the Howard Park and Gardens have helped to add to the character of the building and brought new users to the hall. Although there have been some challenges regarding anti-social behaviour within the park and the periphery, both the LGCCG and NHDC are working closely to resolve issues. LGCCG are currently supporting youth connexions to facilitate youth activities in the main hall on Tuesday and Thursday evenings. It is hoped that that by engaging young people in the park and building, there will be a sense of ownership and young people will value their surroundings.

The hall continues to go from strength to strength and has exceeded expectations. LGCCG continues to build on the heritage and history of Letchworth's first community hall and to this day still remains true to the values and expectations of this pioneering building.

#### 8.9.1 **List of Current Hirers**

- New Life Church
- CHOICE
- Funzone
- Letchworth Children's Centres (Limetree, Ickniel and Chestnut Tree)
- Letchworth and Stevenage Diabetic Society
- Healing Rooms
- National Chidbirth Trust
- Alzheimer's Society (two groups based at the hall)
- Disco Duck
- North Herts Foster Parent Support Group
- Herts County Council (contact services)
- North Herts Sports Partnership (two groups based at the hall)
- Letchworth and District Astronomical Society
- Letchworth Arts and Leisure Group (three groups based at the hall)
- The Letchworth Festival
- Girl Guides
- Brownies
- Letchworth MIND
- Letchworth Role Play Club
- Aum Shanti Yoga

- Kundalini Yoga
- Breakaway Respite Scheme
- North Herts College (three different courses)
- Pre School Learning Alliance
- Space to Learn
- Macular Society
- The Music Train
- Transition Town Letchworth
- Women in Rural Enterprise
- NHS
- Youth Connexions
- Zumba with Maureen
- Food bank.

#### 8.10 **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.

#### 8.11 **Howard Park Signage**

Officers have been investigating the introduction of a finger post informing visitors of Howard Park that the Letchworth Outdoor Pool is 8 minutes walk away. The suggested post will be located on the path where the Birds Hill car park used to be located. The post will be in keeping with the park and therefore, will be made out of galvanised steel painted Holly Green. Officers will present the final design to the Chair prior to proceeding.

### 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 1 of the Localism Act 2011 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 Area Committee Summary Update 2013

15.3 Appendix 3 Young People of the Year Grant Report

15.4 Appendix 4 Letchworth Town Centre Partnership Grant Report

15.5 Appendix 5 Letchworth Great War Project Grant Report

15.6 Appendix 6 New Youth Foundation Workshop Grant Report

15.7 Appendix 7 Cortex Grant Report

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## **17. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

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