

**LETCHWORTH AREA COMMITTEE
12 MARCH 2014**

***PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT**

AGENDA ITEM No.

8

TITLE OF REPORT: CHAMPION NEWS & FINANCE REPORT

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 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 Budget and Visioning Budget as set out in Appendix 1.
- 2.2 That the Committee considers providing the Jackmans Community Association with grant funding of £5,000 towards the cost of the conversion of the former members bar into a community facility, funded from the unallocated capital visioning budget (as outlined in 8.1 and Appendix 2).
- 2.3 That the Committee considers providing grant funding to the Wilbury Community Forum of £1,750 towards the cost of a fully designed website with a Content Management System, integrated blog and linked social media (as outlined in 8.2 and Appendix 3).
- 2.4 That the Committee considers the provision of grant funding to the Letchworth and District Astronomical Society of £500 towards the cost of venue hire and publicity for six public lectures in 2014 (as outlined in 8.3 and Appendix 4).
- 2.5 That the Committee considers the provision of grant funding to North Herts Bowls Club of £375 (as outlined in 8.4 and Appendix 5).

- 2.6 That the Committee considers the provision of grant funding to the Royal British Legion (Letchworth Branch) of £1000 towards the cost of stage and P.A. hire for the Armed Forces Day event on 28th June (as outlined in 8.5 and Appendix 6).
- 2.7 That the Committee considers the provision of grant funding to Khalsa Football Academy of £2000 towards a programme of workshops (as outlined in 8.6 and Appendix 7).
- 2.8 That the Committee considers the provision of grant funding to of The Town Centre Partnership (LTCP) for £8000 of funding towards three major Town Centre Events (as outlined in 8.7 and Appendix 8).
- 2.9 That the Committee considers the provision of grant funding to the Jackmans Fun Day Group £1000 of grant funding is requested towards the cost of organising a community event for the residents of the Jackmans Estate (as outlined in 8.8 and Appendix 9).
- 2.10 That the Committee considers the provision of £1200 grant funding to Letchworth Rotary Club towards the Big Lunch community event (as outlined in 8.9 and Appendix 10).
- 2.11 That the Committee considers the provision of £720 grant funding to Vision4Growth (as outlined in 8.10 and Appendix 11).
- 2.12 That the Committee considers the provision of £810 grant funding to Howard Garden Social Centre towards computer equipment necessary to implement up to date data storage and collection systems (as outlined in 8.11 and Appendix 12).
- 2.13 That the Committee considers awarding support funding in relation to any potential Highways schemes as proposed and discussed under section 8.14 of this report.
- 2.14 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 Priorities of the Council.
- 3.4 Production of this report is a requirement of the 'Priorities for the district' in which the Community Development Officer is required to produce a formal report to the Area Committee on a minimum of 4 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 2013/14.
- 7.2 The spreadsheet also details pre-allocated sums carried forward from the previous financial year 2012/13 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 Area Committee's 2013/14 Area Grant Budget is **£14,630**
- 7.4 There are no funds within the Area Committee's 2012/13 Area Grant Budget that remain uncommitted.
- 7.5 The current level of unallocated funds within the Area Committee's Capital Visioning Grant Budget is **£5,601**

8. PROJECT/ ACTIVITY/ SCHEME DETAILS

8.1 Jackmans Community Association

The Jackmans Community Association are requesting £5000 in order to convert the former members bar into a community facility.

Following the forthcoming renewal of the lease for the Community Centre building to include the old library building and rent office, the association intend to renovate the building to change the old members club for use as a smaller, flexible community facility to provide additionality to the existing hall.

To be able to provide a more flexible operating scenario within the building and thus increase income, the JCA has agreed with NHDC that the new lease should incorporate the formal rent office as an integral part of the associations' activities. In agreeing this the JCA plans to relocate the social club element of the operation to the rent office area, thus freeing up the existing area occupied by the club, and allowing this to be transformed into a second hall for hire for local community groups and clubs, during the day and evening, independent of and in parallel to the operation of the building's main hall. Associated internal adjustments to the building infrastructure will of course be required to achieve these changes which will be discussed with the Planning and Building Control Departments within NHDC but which are seen as being acceptable in those respects in terms of the approvals required. Discussions will also be held with the authorities Licensing and Enforcement officers to determine if any of the current licensing arrangements for the social club, which is operated as a separate organisation to the JCA will be required. But again no insurmountable issues are expected here from these discussions that will impact upon the expansion plans.

The Association have received a quote from an architect who would be employed via Stevenage Borough Council for £25,000, an arrangement used previously for other capital works in the district. There may be a case to apply for Section 106 funding towards the works. Although officers are only able to recommend up to £1500 members may like to consider utilising part of the unallocated Capital Visioning funds toward this project.

The grant report for this project is outlined in Appendix 2 and any decision would be made 'in principle' since the development is subject to the considerations and permissions outlined above.

8.2 Wilbury Community Forum

This newly established group are requesting £1,750 towards the cost of a fully designed website with a Content Management System, integrated blog and linked social media. They also plan to run workshops with young people in order to design a logo and form a young persons user group which will advise on the Web site and develop an on-line presence.

The Wilbury Community Forum has been slowly building their capacity for the last 12 months. They have been setting up small scale initiatives to involve the local community and to research the gaps and needs that local residents have. The development of a community website would assist in engaging with the local community. The group are also hoping to use the project as a tool to encourage technological literacy with both older residents and young people.

The grant report for this project is outlined in Appendix 3.

8.3 Letchworth & District Astronomical Society

The Astronomical Society are requesting £500 towards the cost of venue hire and publicity for six public lectures in 2014. The lectures will be presented under the umbrella of "Key Moments in Astronomy". The six lectures will be prepared and presented by members of the society at no cost. The lectures will take place in March, April, May, September, October and November 2014.

The society aims to encourage interest in astronomy through monthly meetings and regular observing sessions. The popularity of TV programmes such as BBC's Stargazing Live has wetted the public's appetite for astronomy knowledge. In Letchworth the group had over 200 people attend their associated event. Their objective is to tap into this interest and increase people's knowledge and enjoyment of science and astronomy in particular. In order to make the lectures accessible to the wider community they charge a nominal entrance fee of £1.00 which includes refreshments.

Due to the popularity of the lectures last year, the group have relocated the events from Mrs Howard Memorial Hall to the Free Church Hall.

The grant report for this project is outlined in Appendix 4.

8.4 **North Herts Bowls Club**

The members of the North Herts Bowls Club have been invited by MP Oliver Heald to visit the House of Commons in order to learn more about the democratic process. The group are requesting £375 to cover the cost of coach hire for the trip.

The trip has been organised to take place on June 23rd. The Bowls Club extend invitations to other groups to join them for their excursions and events such as Letchworth MIND.

The grant report for this project is outlined in Appendix 5

8.5 **The Royal British Legion (Letchworth Branch)**

The RBL are requesting £1000 grant funding towards the cost of organising a two day event to celebrate Armed Forces Day and also commemorate the start of WW1.

If successful, the funds will be used for hire of staging and PA system in order for live entertainment to take place. It is hoped to have young musicians performing songs from the WW1 era with a modern twist. The programme will also feature community orchestras and bands.

The group hope to gain £300 income from stalls and attractions over the weekend and raise a further £200 from fundraising events.

The grant report for this project is outlined in Appendix 6

8.6 **Khalsa Football Academy (KFA)**

KFA aims; to increase the participation of ethnic minority players in grass roots football, develop skills and confidence, challenge stereotypes and racism, facilitate initiatives in which all people are treated as equal by promoting integration. The project will provide football opportunities for Asians to participate in football at grass roots level.

The KFA are requesting £2,000 grant funding towards a 12 month programme of workshops outlined below:

- **Freestyle workshop:** Individual skill through creativity, influenced heavily by rhythm and music. Fearnhill Sports Centre.
- **Educational workshops:** Combines football and workshop topics which include racism, poverty, equality and under representation.
- **Football coaching classes:** Opportunity for Asian youngsters to participate in football coaching sessions. Weekday evenings and weekend.
- **Futsal League:** Futsal league Fearnhill
- **Festival:** Festival to help challenge negative stereotypes.

Following receiving £1,000 grant funding from NHDC in January 2012 the KFA have been running regular Saturday sessions at Fearnhill School. They use both Futsal and Joga 3V3 which are based on South American styles of fast paced 5 and 3 a-side games of Soccer.

The provide facilities from ages 7 right up to 24 year olds, using sport to work towards community cohesion by bringing together Asian young people with those from other communities. The main aim is to develop relationships and promote integration. The project uses both football and workshops which include Equality, Anti-Racism which supports the provision of diversionary activities for young people and education development of an active and healthy lifestyle.

Over the 12 month period:

- The Joga has attracted 140 participants of which 60% were of Asian heritage, 10% of African / Caribbean heritage and 30% White European heritage.
- The Futsal has attracted 120 participants of which 45% were of Asian heritage and 55% from White European heritage.

The grant report for this project is outlined in Appendix 7

8.7 **Letchworth Town Centre Partnership Events**

The Town Centre Partnership (LTCP) are requesting £8000 of funding towards three major town centre events which are: Food & Garden Festival 17th & 18th May 2014, Street Fest (currently proposed for 7th June 2014) and the Christmas programme, which includes the Christmas Lights Switch-On event - 21 November (not confirmed date). Funding will enable the LTCP to create strong marketing outreach campaigns for all events that will help build a sense of anticipation and capture people's imaginations both locally and regionally and drive people to the town.

The events have proven very popular in the past and the LTCP are continuing to drive improvements and value for money. This year, for example, they are working closely with Love Food Roadshows to increase sponsorship of the Food & Garden Festival. This year the extra sponsorship they hope to attract will improve the marketing reach, with the objective of becoming self-sustaining, although this is expected to take another 3-5 years.

All three events will have a significant online presence via websites and social media channels as well as local press. Each event will have a marketing campaign that ensures the public will be advised of specific event timings, locations and details through free brochures, paid for advertising in local and regional press, window and display posters, and promotional banners.

Please note that Letchworth BID are not able to fund these activities as the BID must provide additionality. These key events in the Town's calendar will need to obtain grant funding in order to continue. The BID can, however, seek to improve events where appropriate and there is some work being undertaken to improve the sound at the Christmas Lights event, for example.

Retailers 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 2013. Footfall counters showed that shopper and visitor numbers increase on days where free events are being held. Strong marketing outreach campaigns for each of these events should help reposition Letchworth as a vibrant lively town within the region benefitting not just the town centre but residents and visitors alike.

The events attract significant PR and community engagement. NHDC will be clearly identified as one of the events sponsors. 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. LTCP are committed to working with local community groups to develop the offer and they also promote the activities through the community groups channels – further developing the clear link between the local authority and Love Letchworth.

In considering the grant application for these events, it may be helpful for members to be aware of the development of the BID and relationship of that with the LTCP. At the time of writing this report, the authority and 'shadow' BID board members were awaiting the outcome of the Secretary of States' review of the appeal challenging the validity of the BID pre-ballot and ballot process. Provided that decision is not to uphold and allow the BID development to continue, the BID company development will also progress and, over a period of time yet to be confirmed, the LTC Partnership itself will be wound up.

The grant report for this project is outlined in Appendix 8

8.8 Jackmans Fun Day

£1000 of grant funding is requested towards the cost of organising a community event for the residents of the Jackmans Estate. This will bring the community together and help promote the Community Centre, local schools, churches, businesses and groups. This event is important to encourage community cohesion on the Jackmans Estate. It assists in the promotion of local community groups and activities.

The Fun Day Group have had grant funding of £700 agreed from HCC Cllr Hone's County locality budget and will be applying for grant aid from the LGCHF. They have some funds within their own budgets that are profits from last years event which will make up any shortfall in funding received this year.

The grant report for this project is outlined in Appendix 9

8.9 Rotary Club Big Lunch Event

£1200 grant funding is requested for the Big Lunch event on June 1st on Howard Park. The Big Lunch was an initiative launched in 2009 and originally founded by Tim Smith the Chief executive of the Eden Project in partnership with the Big Lottery. The aim of these events is: 'to encourage people across the UK to have lunch with their neighbours, once a year as a simple act of community, friendship and fun.'

The Local Government Information Unit recently published a report which analyses the social impact of the Big Lunch since it's launch 5 years ago. This report states that those who have taken part in an event, feel closer to their neighbours, met new people, thought that the event had a positive impact on their community and kept in touch with the people that they met. It therefore has a continuing community benefit which extends far beyond the day itself.

The Rotary Club of Letchworth Garden City have been organising this event in the Town for the last two years. Funding is required to cover the cost of marketing and publicity, transport costs and hiring a marquee. At last years event between 1000 and 1500 people attended and depending on the weather in 2014 it is hoped to attract a similar sized audience.

The grant report for this project is outlined in Appendix 10

8.10 **Vision4Growth**

Vision4Growth started in Letchworth by providing tennis for visually impaired people. The group has now grown and has a core committee of three who are themselves blind or visually impaired and 20 volunteers. As well as tennis they also create opportunities for people with sight loss such as 'Cooking with Confidence' on how to make cooking more accessible for people with sight loss and 'Visual Impairment Awareness Training'.

The group have recently been registered as a Community Interest Company (CIC) which means they are 'not for profit'; a Community Interest Company re-invests any profit back into its own, and other community projects. The committee have been undertaking the day to day book keeping but as they suffer from visual impairment themselves this task takes 3 to 4 times longer than it would for a fully sighted person. They are currently seeking a voluntary treasurer / book keeper via the NHCVS. However they would like to be able to hire temporary book keeping services in order to set up an accounting system and carry out a few hours booking keeping per week until a volunteer can be found.

The group are requesting grant funding of £720 to cover the cost of book keeping services. The initial set up of the accounting system would cost £200 and 26 hours of booking keeping at £20 per hour will equate to £520.

The grant report for this project is outlined in Appendix 11

8.11 **Howard Garden Social and Day Care Centre**

The centre is requesting £810 grant funding towards the cost of one of two computers needed to update the present administration systems. Historically the administrators have used manual systems for record keeping which are now out dated. Although they do have computers they are not suitable for business use and not compatible with new versions of business software or for access to the internet.

The Centre is in the process of restructuring the day to day management which will need to include implementing more current information technology in order to run effectively.

The Centre will cover the cost of one of the computers from their own funds but is requesting funding to purchase a second one.

The grant report for this project is outlined in Appendix 12

8.12 **Box Cleva**

Information on attendees as requested by members at the meeting held on 8th January 2014.

29 Referrals

22 Male

7 Female

All White British

All aged between 7 and 13 years old

2 Are in foster care

Attendee's average between 10 - 15 each week

Many of the referrals suffer from ADHD, low self esteem and are victims of bullying.

More than 50 % have been referred for there involvement in anti social behaviour.

The first awards we had 25 passed their Bronze, 15 Silver and 5 Gold

8.13 As per the resolution of the Letchworth Committee at the last meeting held on the 8th January to continue to have 6 meetings per Civic Year. Two dates have been identified by the Committee and Member Services Officer to be added to the Civic calendar being, 23 July 2014 and 21 January 2015.

8.14 World War I Commemorations

Following a request from members for an update on events to Commemorate WW1 in the Town and any external funding opportunities that may arise please refer to the Information Note attached as Appendix 14..

8.15. Highways Schemes

The Letchworth Area Committee provided funds towards Highways Schemes in January 2012 for the following; Gaunts Way scheme, Redhoods Way junction with Cowslip Hill, Field Lane (between Sollershott East and Souberie Avenue) and the Junction of Bedford Road and Bursland, Letchworth.

With regard to Gaunts Way - The area committee contribution was put towards the investigation and consultation looking into verge protection and parking measures on Gaunts Way. The investigation was concluded, please see Appendix 15. As members will recall the JMP ceased in 2012 at which point they moved to HLB. Accordingly the recommendations from that report were placed on the County Members list of potential candidates for future consideration.

With respect to the other three sites these were all junction protection measures which were consulted upon and implemented, please see attached decision records in Appendix 16.

8.16 Highways Matters

It was agreed 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 include 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 1st October 2010, a major piece of legislation. The Act also created a new Public Sector Equality Duty, which came into force on the 5th 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 - Letchworth Area Committee Budget Report 2013/14
- 15.2 Appendix 2 - Grant Form, Jackmans Community Association
- 15.3 Appendix 3 - Grant Form, Wilbury Community Forum
- 15.4 Appendix 4 - Grant Form, Letchworth and District Astronomical Society
- 15.5 Appendix 5 - Grant Form, North Herts. Bowls Club (Letchworth)
- 15.6 Appendix 6 - Grant Form, Royal British Legion (Letchworth Branch)
- 15.7 Appendix 7 - Grant Form, Khalsa Youth Football Academy
- 15.8 Appendix 8 - Grant Form, Letchworth Town Centre Partnership
- 15.9 Appendix 9 – Grant Form, Jackmans Community Funday
- 15.10 Appendix 10 – Grant Form, Rotary Club of LGC Big Lunch
- 15.11 Appendix 11 - Grant Form, Vision4Growth Appendix
- 15.12 Appendix 12 - Grant Form, Howard Gardens Social and Daycare Centre
- 15.13 Appendix 13 - Area Committee Summary Update 2013 – 2014
- 15.14 Appendix 14 – Information Note on WW1 Commemoration Activities
- 15.15 Appendix 15 - Gaunts Way Final Report
- 15.16 Appendix 16 – Highways Decision Records

16. CONTACT OFFICERS

- 16.1 Author: Claire Morgan Community Development Officer – Letchworth
Telephone: 01462 474226
Email: claire.morgan@north-herts.gov.uk
- 16.2 Contributors: Shah Mohammed, Assistant Accountant
Telephone: 01462 474240
EMail: shah.mohammed@north-herts.gov.uk

Liz Green, Head of Policy & Community Services
Telephone: 01462 474230
Email: liz.green@north-herts.gov.uk

17. BACKGROUND PAPERS

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