

**TITLE OF REPORT: GRANT APPLICATIONS AND COMMUNITY UPDATE**

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF POLICY &amp; 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 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 grant funding of £750 to Rhapsode for a Community Apple Pressing project (as outlined in 8.1 and appendix 2).
- 2.3 That the Committee considers grant funding of £1250 to City Chorus to purchase staging and safety barriers (as outlined in 8.2 and appendix 3).
- 2.4 That the Committee considers grant funding of £1450 for NHCVS Furniture Link towards the cost of a delivery vehicle (as outlined in 8.3 and appendix 4).
- 2.5 That the Committee considers awarding support funding in relation to any potential Highways schemes as proposed and discussed under section 8.7 of this report.
- 2.6 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 policy.
- 3.3 The awarding of financial assistance to voluntary organisations and the use of discretionary spending allows the Committee to further the aims of the 'Priorities for the District'.
- 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 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 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 Spread sheet, which relates to the Area Committee budget balances for the current financial year 2014/15.  
Members should be aware that the amount remaining within the unallocated Development Budget if spread equally between the remaining 4 meetings of the area committee would equate to £4025 per meeting to be allocated.
- 7.2 The spread sheet also details pre-allocated sums carried forward from the previous financial year 2013/14 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 2014/15 Area Grant Budget is **£16,103**.
- 7.4 There is **£220** funds carried forward from within the Area Committee's 2013/14 Area Grant Budget that remains uncommitted.

7.5 The Area Committee's Capital Visioning Grant Budget is now fully allocated.

## 8. PROJECT/ ACTIVITY/ SCHEME DETAILS

### 8.1 Rhapsode Apple Pressing Project

Rhapsode is a community arts and enterprise project They were set up as a community interest company (not for profit) in 2006. They are based in their Dot 2 Dot art café in the Wynd.

They are requesting £750 towards a community apple pressing project which will cost £1050. They are sourcing additional funding from Hertfordshire County Council's Locality Budget and from Crowd Funding. It is hoped that the project will be profitable and any profit will be used to continue the success of the project in 2015.

Rhapsode would like to facilitate a pilot, community-led Letchworth Apple Juice Cooperative operation. The concept is to run a small project this year to test costs, public interest, establish strong partners, to seek potential buyers, create a market and to produce some pasteurised apple juice 'from the town, for the town'.

This will be achieved by:

- 1) create a means by which people with a small number of apples can still have their fruit pressed and pasteurised (there is a minimum amount required for one pressing);
- 2) link volunteer pickers (possibly without apple trees/gardens of their own but not necessarily) with people with apple trees who are unable to pick theirs (ie elderly/disabled). Two results from this - 1 the apples do not go to waste and residents are able to have their own apple juice, 2 - tackle isolation of the elderly and create social links in communities;
- 3) to create a working group of partners, entrepreneurs, community-minded, green-minded people to take this project into 2015 on a larger and more sustainable scale;
- 4) raise awareness of the unpicked fruit in Letchworth and explore a realistic and sustainable means to harvest this and produce a very 'accessible' product – (apple juice goes down far better than pureed apple).

Partners so far are: Transition Town Letchworth, Howard Gardens Day Centre, various stitch and knit groups (we will use these as a means to generate interest in the project), and Arch Community Group. We have some volunteers also interested in assisting with the project including Ian Warder who helped set-up Transition Town Letchworth and organises a large scale apple pressing at St Christopher School and Hilary Kemp who volunteers with Howard Gardens Day Centre.

The project will be of benefit to:

- Letchworth residents and local businesses who wish to buy or sell locally sourced apple juice, residents who are unable to pick their own fruit (volunteers will do this for them);
- Residents who want to press their apples but do not have enough apples (there is a minimum required for a pressing), or the knowledge or knowhow to do it themselves;
- Letchworth itself - it would be newsworthy and help contribute to Letchworth's growing reputation to be interested in community, arts and sustainability.

Rhapsode will aim to pick apples from 30 gardens. Therefore 30 people/families will be able to have their apples pressed into apple juice (their apples picked either by themselves or by volunteers). However, if more volunteers come forward and enough advance orders are taken (the pressing needs to be paid for upfront at £1.35/bottle) then this number may increase. In addition, social and community benefit for the stitch

and knitters who will be promoting the project by knitting fruit to hang on trees and display in shop windows.

## 8.2 **City Chorus**

City Chorus are a Letchworth Based Choir who perform both internationally and at many local events. They are based at the Letchworth Free Church but as their numbers are continuing to grow they require extra staging and safety barriers for health and safety reasons.

The staging and safety barriers will be removable, but will be available for use by the Church for other users and Community Groups.

The cost of the staging and barriers will be £2500 and the Choir are applying for £1250 (50% of the funds required). They will be funding the remainder from within their own budgets.

## 8.3 **NHCVS Furniture Link**

Furniture Link was set up to provide low cost furniture to the local community of North Herts and to reduce the amount of bulky goods sent to landfill. They have a showroom based in Letchworth.

Furniture Link are seeking funding of £1450 from the Letchworth Committee towards the provision of a good quality second hand van. Furniture Link is a fully independent project of North Herts Centre for Voluntary Services. The vehicle will replace the existing van which is on its last legs. This is needed to collect and deliver the furniture. The total cost of replacing the existing vehicle will be £14,034. Furniture Link is requesting £2900 from NHDC. As the project covers the whole of the district each area committee is being asked for a contribution. Approximately 50% of the users of the service are based in Letchworth, therefore a contribution of £1450 is being requested from within the Letchworth Committee budget. The remaining 50% is being split a further 4 ways between, Hitchin, Baldock & District, Royston and Southern Rural Committees who will be asked to contribute £363.

Other funds are being sought from NHCVS £4234, HCC Locality Budget £2900, LGCHF £3000, and Herts Community Fund £1000.

## 8.4 **Update on Fenners Artists project**

During the first week of Letchworth Festival in June, Fenners artists welcomed schools and families to join them in a range of free, exciting creative activities., sponsored by NHDC Letchworth Committee and Letchworth Heritage Foundation.

There were eight schools workshops for pupils and their teachers, and two weekend drop-ins. Throughout the week, people of all ages and abilities were introduced to new techniques, processes and ways of thinking while exploring a range of media with Digswell artists.

## 8.5 **Wilbury Community Forum**

### Update on Web Design project

The group have been working with the Head Teacher of Fearnill School to implement the project at the end of the Summer term. However, as this overlapped with exam time the capacity of staff at the School was limited.

The group have held discussions with the School and the Graphic Designer to discuss the project. The School will be identifying students from Wilbury Ward who are taking Art, Business Studies and ICT, and have proposed dates for two workshops to take

place in September and October. The dates will be confirmed at the start of the new school term.

The designer and a volunteer from Wilbury Community Forum have devised and proposed the structure of the sessions, the learning outcomes and culminate in the production of a new website for the Wilbury Community Forum.

#### **8.6 Update on Broadway Open Air Cinema event**

Broadway Cinema held a free open air cinema event on Broadway Gardens on Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> August. The event was funded by the Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation with the support of NHDC Officers where necessary. In order to control audience numbers free tickets were available to book via the Broadway Cinema website. An audience of 600 people enjoyed a viewing of the classic film Grease.

#### **8.7 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, as a body, 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 2014/15 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 Letchworth Area Committee Budget Report 2014/15
- 15.2 Appendix 2 Rhapsode Apple Pressing – Grant Report
- 15.3 Appendix 3 City Chorus – Grant Report
- 15.4 Appendix 4 NHCVS Furniture Link – Grant Report
- 15.5 Appendix 5 Area Committee Summary Update 2013 – 2014

## **16. CONTACT OFFICERS**

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## **17. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

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