

**LETCHWORTH AREA COMMITTEE
9 DECEMBER 2015**

***PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT**

AGENDA ITEM No.

6

TITLE OF REPORT: GRANTS, AND 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 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 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 the application for grant funding of £600 to the Imajica Theatre Company for a Christmas Event targeting disadvantaged families, as outlined in 8.1.1, Appendix 2
- 2.3 That the Committee considers the application for grant funding of £185 to the Hitchin Kings Basketball Club (based at Highfield School, Letchworth) to purchase new equipment, as outlined in 8.1.2 Appendix 3.
- 2.4 That the Committee endorses the actions taken by the Community 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 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'.

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 RELEVANT MEMBERS AND EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS

- 5.1 Consultation with relevant 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 2015/16.
- 7.2 The current level of unallocated funds within the Area Committee's 2015/16 Area Grant Budget is **£21,200**. Given that there are three meetings left, within this civic year this would equate to £7,066 per meeting to allocate.
- 7.3 There is **£248** funds remaining in the carried forward amounts from within the Area Committee's 2014/15 Area Grant Budget that £220 have been allocated towards the cost of producing a leaflet for Councillors Surgeries.

8. GRANT FUNDING AND COMMUNITY UPDATE

8.1 Grant Funding

8.1.1 Imajica Theatre Company

Imajica Theatre Company has set up as a community interest Company earlier this year. They are requesting £600 grant funding towards the cost of producing a Christmas event for disadvantaged families in the Wilbury Area.

They will be presenting a community Christmas Party on 12th December for the disadvantaged children in the Wilbury area of Letchworth. The party will include a pantomime show, buffet and a visit from Santa with a gift, pantomime brochure, a signed photo of the cast plus an interactive Boogie Woogie fun and games session.

The event will be targeting families in the Wilbury Area who find Christmas time quite a challenge. This will include dis-advantaged children, young carers and looked after children to create magical memories and an opportunity for new experiences.

There is no entry to be charged for the event and the audience will be specially invited following referral from schools, children's centres and community groups.

Imajica has already secured £1060 grant funding toward the project from County Cllr Lorna Kercher's HCC locality budget and local businesses and the local community.

They need a further £600 which will cover the cost of hire of the venue (Fearnhill School) and the production and printing of the Pantomime Brochure. (As outlined in Appendix 2)

8.1.2 Hitchin Kings Basketball Club (under 14's)

Hitchin Kings Basketball club are requesting £185 to cover the purchase of training equipment for under-14s moving into under-16 age group. The young people pay £15 per month to play each Monday evening. These fees can be waved for families who may struggle with the cost.

It is clear from the club's accounts, that the monthly subscription fees collected only just cover the £390 per month cost of court hire from Highfield School. The club received £1,500 funding in 2014 towards the setting up of a girls team. (As outlined in Appendix 3)

8.2 Community Update

8.2.1 Jackmans Community Centre – Old Library Redevelopment

The first phase of the redevelopment is complete including the installation of the new windows. The originally allocated £29,000 of Community Halls Section 106 funding has therefore been released, following the agreement of officers in the Planning Department.

The original estimate for the project was £32,600. However, due to unforeseen structural and other issues identified as as part of the first phase works the overall costs to complete the project have been more than originally budgeted for and thus the project will require the allocation of £14,378 further Section 106 funds.

The Jackmans Community Association have provided £5,000 from their own reserves for the first phase and will provide a further £5,000 for the second phase towards the increased costs. In addition The Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation has also provided grant funding of £7,000 towards fixtures and fittings for the completed area but cannot be used for capital costs however.

8.2.2 Update on Jackie's Drop In

The Communities Officer has been advising volunteers at Jackie's Drop In Centre in regard to the imminent move from St Michaels House on Norton Way South to the former Social Services building annex to the old Grammar School on Broadway currently operated by North Herts College. The building is owned by the Letchworth Heritage Foundation who are selling St Michaels House.

Jackie's Drop In provide social and educational activities to their members who have learning disabilities. They are outgrowing St Michael House as their client numbers rapidly grow. The volunteers running the provision are eagerly looking forward to moving to the larger building. However the new building is on two floors and in order for those clients who also have issues with mobility to reach activities on the upper floor a lift is needed to be installed.

Jackie's Drop In are trying to raise between £20,000 and £30,000 to install a lift, a sensory room and for general redecoration of the premises.

In the past the group have received a total of £3,873 from Letchworth Area Committee Budgets over the last 3 years. This has helped to fund tables and chairs, computer equipment and earlier this year were granted £1000 toward putting on their fundraising funday, which was a great success.

Volunteers are currently using a variety of methods to raise the funds and seeking advice from a range of local agencies. They may submit an application to Letchworth members in the 2016/17 financial year.

8.2.3 Update on previous grants awarded

- i) North Herts Centre for Voluntary Services (NHCVS) - Furniture Link
£363 grant funding was provided by Hitchin Area Committee in September 2014 as a percentage contribution across the five District Area Committees. Towards the cost of the purchase of a new van for Furniture Link.

As the project covered the whole of the district each area committee was requested to provide a contribution. Approximately 50% of the users of the service are based in Letchworth, therefore a contribution of £1450 was provided from within the Letchworth Committee budget. The remaining 50% was divided in four between, Hitchin, Baldock & District, Royston and Southern Rural Committees who all agreed to contribute £363.

The new Furniture Link van was put into service at the beginning of December. Staff at Furniture Link has stated "It has been lovely to have a reliable vehicle to use especially during the winter months and it has made planning collections and donations easier for both customers and Furniture Link staff".

The new logo and clearer contact details mean that they have a regular presence on the roads in North Herts as they deliver and collect. The first six months of the year have been profitable with their weekly sales target of £1000 being met. Furniture Link has saved approximately 20 tonnes from landfill from January to July 2015. The van has been used to deliver almost all of the 816 items sold during the period as well as collect the 1146 donated during the same time period. Without a new van, Furniture Link could not have reliably and regularly achieved this.

ii) Kids Cook Project

The project took place over the school summer holidays to provide food and education about healthy eating to families in need on the Wilbury Estate in Letchworth. Donations of food were received from the Letchworth Food Bank; Tesco (Baldock), Morrison's and Cox's Fish & Chip shop provided potatoes.

Evaluation report from the organisers.

- A success with an average of 29 children and 15 adults attending over the five sessions.
- A good mix of families attended although we are unable to offer a breakdown of the constituents of the family groupings
- We observed that the diverse nature of the community was represented but only one person with a disability presented.
- Those who attended came from quite a wide geographical area.
- A good number of volunteers – over the last three sessions the parents/carers took a much more active role in the preparation of the food.
- No significant problems concerning dietary/allergies
- A good range of food was available – pasta, pizza with toppings, hot-dogs (last two week), salad, variety of fruit favourite being melon, fruit drinks and water, suitable biscuits.
- The children were able to prepare meals and then it was cooked by the volunteers/parents/carers.
- Children eat for free but after the second week adults were asked to make a small donation
- It was thought there was a need for more organised activity during/after meal and this was arranged and so the sessions were changed for the last three weeks.
- A number of Foodbank vouchers were issued and a number of agencies were signposted. Volunteers/adults asked for more activities and training
- St Thomas's Church Safeguarding, Fire and First Aid policies observed

Plans for the future of the project

- Many people came from outside of Wilbury so there may be a need for such activity on the Grange, Jackmans, and Westbury?
- Maintain and seek further funding
- More use of kitchen by children?
- Training/activity for specific groups
- Need for a social media identity/advertising to develop the KC (Kids Cook!) circle logo. More banners
- Hold similar events during all the school holidays – themed?
- Links with other activities during the school holidays
- Develop an Evaluation process

The next 'Kids Cook!' will take place on Tuesday 27th October following the theme of Harvest

The organisers are hoping to roll out the program next year with Letchworth Churches together to run Kids Cook Projects in other areas of Letchworth. They

are planning to create a voluntary management committee for the project and are seeking volunteers to sit on it.

iii) Home-Start North Herts

Home-Start has now matched four families in Letchworth (one has been funded via Hertfordshire County Cllr Lorna Kercher's locality budget. Postcodes are (all SG6): 4XG, 4BW, 4BQ, 2NZ

They still have funds remaining from North Hertfordshire District Council's Letchworth and Baldock Committees to match two more families in Letchworth and one in Baldock.

The Communities Officer recently attended the Home-Start North Herts Annual General Meeting, where it was reported that; in order to save more money Home-Start will be leaving their offices in Letchworth hopefully by the end of November. Their administrator will work out of the Home-Start office in Stevenage (as they have their offices rent free). The Scheme Manager and assistant will continue to work locally homeworking and arranging access to a hot desk in Letchworth. There will be no change in the service provision to their families and volunteers. They will still continue to be Home-Start North Herts but office space will be shared with Stevenage Home-Start as it is more cost effective. They will continue to access free room hire to hold support and supervision with their volunteers locally. Although this will be a different way of working Home-Start North Herts are confident that this move will allow them to continue to focus on supporting more families in North Herts.

With the move and focus on obtaining funding, the family fun days that they had hoped to hold in Letchworth and Baldock before Christmas may be postponed until spring 2016.

Home-Start have also been successful with the transitional funding from Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) which will be used for making the necessary changes for all 9 schemes in Hertfordshire, and changing the structure of how they work moving forward. They have also been allocated funding from HCC for North Herts to cover the cost of service provision for the existing families they have been working with under the HCC funding. This also now puts Home-Start North Herts in a much stronger financial position.

8.3 **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. 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.

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 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 Communities 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 2015/16
- 15.2 Appendix 2 Imajica Theatre Company – Grant Report
- 15.3 Appendix 3 Hitchin Kings Basketball – Grant Report

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17. BACKGROUND PAPERS