

LETCHWORTH AREA COMMITTEE
27th JANUARY 2016

***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 **£1,000** to the K and Y Activities in 8.1.1, Appendix 2
- 2.3 That the Committee considers the application for grant funding £1,500 (being the maximum the officer can recommend) for the Letchworth Garden City Rugby club who are requesting **£6,789** grant funding to as outlined in 8.1.2 Appendix 3.
- 2.4 That the Committee considers the application for grant funding of **£1,000** to Letchworth Caribbean Harmony club as outlined in 8.1.3 Appendix 4.
- 2.5 That the Committee considers the application for grant funding of £1,500 (being the maximum the officer can recommend) to Letchworth Town Centre Partnership who are requesting **£8,000** grant funding towards four town centre events in 2016, as outlined in Appendix 5, and having considered the officer advice at 8.1.4.

- 2.6 That the Committee considers the application for grant funding of **£1,500** to Letchworth Festival Steering Committee as outlined in 8.1.5 Appendix 6
- 2.7 That the Committee considers the application for grant funding £1,500 (being the maximum the officer can recommend) for the Citizens Advice North Herts who are requesting **£20,000** as outlined in 8.1.6 appendix 7.
- 2.8 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 **£20,415**. Given that there are two meetings left, within this civic year this would equate to £10,207 per meeting to allocate.
- 7.3 There is **£248** remaining in the carried forward amounts from within the Area Committee's 2014/15 Area Grant Budget of which £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 K and Y Activities

The organisation are requesting grant funding of £1,000 in order to provide a Sunday Games Cafe, aimed at adults with learning disabilities aged 18 to 90 years old. They intend to provide educational games and sports activities to approximately 25 members.

The funding is required towards the initial set up costs of running a Sunday Games Café. Costs are:

- 1) For Games: Board and card games for members to play.
- 2) A laptop and 4 tablets for members to use for running the café.
- 3) Equipment for the café: mugs, toaster, storage canisters.
- 4) Printing of User Manual for members and advertising the café.

The group will hire the facilities at Mrs Howard Hall 2pm till 4pm

They decided that there is a need for the Games Café as there is nowhere for people with learning difficulties to go on a Sunday, which is the loneliest day of the week.

The café will stimulate young adults with games and also allow them to own the project by running the café.

They will be stimulated by learning new tasks in running the café. Each member will help, according to their abilities, such as making tea, coffee and toast. They will learn how to organise themselves and the café. Participants will also experience handling of money by taking admission fees, learning about healthy eating, budgeting and improving communication skills. Learning games also works to improve their communication skills.

(As outlined in Appendix 2)

8.1.2 Letchworth Garden City Rugby Club

The Rugby Club are requesting grant funding to cover the cost of a tag rugby kit to use for a 12 week course of after school rugby sessions in primary schools, printing and publicity to promote these sessions in 20 schools across Letchworth and Baldock. The club are also requesting funds to cover the cost of Rugby scholarships available for 34 children from both towns. The cost of each scholarship is £242 each child this covers the cost of kit required and club membership fees.

It is against North Hertfordshire District Council's grant criteria to provide grant funding for individuals through membership fees and similar, as that is deemed 'ultra vires' but the cost of the kit which could be re-used for subsequent players could be provided if Members are minded to do so.

Of the £242 the cost of membership is £120 and the cost of kit and boots is £122. For 34 scholarships the total cost of kit and boots without membership would be £4,148.

The cost of kit is based on the price as sold in the Rugby Club shop.

The costs that the Rugby Club are looking to apply for are outlined below:

12 week after school Tag Rugby Clubs in 10 schools targeting 200 children

- Tag Rugby Kit including; tags, bibs, balls, cones, ball pump, first aid kit **£530**
Cllr Hone has funded two kits from his HCC locality budget
- Coaching costs for two schools in areas of deprivation: **£960**
(the other schools make a charge for afterschool clubs which will cover the cost of coaching fees)
- Printing and publicity (leaflets and posters) to promote the clubs **£2,800**

Total cost of the Tag Rugby Afterschool Clubs = **£4,290**

The cost of the scholarship is £242 per head. This figure includes the cost of membership fee and kit. As mentioned above NHDC can not provide funding for such individual membership fees. The club is trying to target children from disadvantaged families who may have a talent for rugby but find the fees restrictive. The Rugby Club have requested **£8,228** to cover the cost of 17 local children to enter the Scholarship scheme. In total the Letchworth GC Rugby Club is requesting **£12,518**.

At a meeting of the Jackman's Networking Group in November 2015 the business manager at Garden City Academy informed the group that the school had a lot of rugby kit and equipment, which is possibly the case for other primary schools in the town.

If grant funding is awarded this amount should be split between both the Letchworth Area Committee and the Baldock & District Committee.

(As outlined in Appendix 3)

8.1.3 Letchworth Caribbean Harmony Group

The Letchworth Caribbean Harmony Group was set up in October 2007 to promote cultural, social and educational activities amongst the town's Caribbean community. Regular meetings take place on the first Saturday of the month from 2:00pm - 4:00pm at either Howard Garden Social and Day Care Centre, Norton Way South, Letchworth Garden City, Herts SG6 1SU or Hadleigh, Jackman's Estate.

The group has approximately 50 members who pay £10 per year subscription which they use to cover the expenses of running the club. They target all age ranges but have a seniors group for the over 60's who meet fortnightly.

The group are requesting £1,000 grant funding towards the cost two events taking place in 2016:

- an educational day trip to Brixton Cultural Museum in order to educate their members about Black History
- a day of health and fitness at Jackmans Community Centre aimed at the African / Caribbean community. This will provide taster sessions of keep fit and exercise and information on health issues that often affect the African and Caribbean community.

Both activities will result in greater community cohesion and cultural understanding as well as encouraging better health and wellbeing. (As outlined in Appendix 4)

8.1.4 Letchworth Town Centre Partnership

The Letchworth Town Centre Partnership (LTCP) are requesting £8,000 grant funding towards the cost of holding 4 major town centre events during 2016.

Letchworth Food & Drink Festival

Saturday 28th May – Sunday 29th May

Funding is required to cover the cost of the music stage, sound and generator costs for bands to play during the event. The LTCP are also seeking funding for the Food and Drink programme to be printed and distributed to Letchworth, Baldock and the surrounding villages.

Town Centre Take Over

Saturday 23rd July

There will be various walkabout entertainers hired to walk around the town centre. LTCP are seeking funding for 4 walkabout entertainers for this event.

Oktoberfest & World Food Festival

Saturday 15th October (& Sunday 16th October??)

LTCP are seeking funding for the hire of the beer tent marquee and 24 hour security of the beer tent marquee.

The Letchworth Christmas Light Switch On

Saturday 26th November

LTCP are seeking funding towards the cost of the stage where various artists will be performing, also seeking funding towards the cost of the fireworks display once the lights have been switch on at 5:30pm.

The total cost of the four events is calculated at £45,400 and the Letchworth BID Company will be providing the remaining £37,400. These large scale weekend events are essential for maintaining the vibrancy of Letchworth Town Centre. They attract a large audience from both Letchworth and surrounding areas, increasing footfall and raising awareness of the Town Centre offer. The LTCP have been in receipt of a Memorandum of Understanding and received £6,900 MoU in the 2015/16 financial year. This was the last payment of the MoU agreement and they will not be receiving further MoU funding in 2016/17 financial year.

Members may recall that the decision to reduce and gradually phase out payments to Town Centre Partnerships was taken by Cabinet in 2011, in order that they became self sustaining. Since that time, of course, there has been the advent of BIDs, with Letchworth having established such an arrangement; NHDC, through its town centre assets such as buildings and car parks within the BID area, make a contribution to the additional levy intended to build greater capacity, including through events, within the town centre. The application to fund should therefore be considered in the light of both this contribution the contribution of officer time NHDC assign to conducting the renewal ballots and collection, handling of the BID levy.

(As outlined in Appendix 5)

8.1.5 Letchworth Festival Steering Committee

The festival steering committee are planning to coordinate two major events as part of the festival fortnight from 11 to 26 June 2016. The main aim of the festival is to celebrate Letchworth Life. It helps to bring together the community, local businesses, voluntary groups, schools, North Herts College and Da Vinci Studio School in order to work in partnership to provide a wide range of events to appeal to all aspects of the local community.

The Festival will culminate as usual with the ever popular 'Proms In The Park' at Howard Park featuring bands and orchestras from local schools, clubs and organisations. The Proms will be a free event for all residents of Letchworth and are aimed to include the whole local community, including consideration for disabled access and participation.

The Committee have also requested funds to be used to support small groups in the town who wish to put on small events as during the festival fortnight. The Letchworth Councillors suggested when the Festival Committee was first established 2009 that it was preferable for the Festival Steering Committee to distribute small grants of usually under £100 to small groups in the Town which would avoid an influx of small grants coming to area committee in the run up to the Festival.

These grants are usually provided to underwrite any losses on ticket sales and to cover assistance with publicity and marketing costs. (as outlined in Appendix 6)

8.1.6 Citizens Advice North Herts

Citizens Advice North Hertfordshire (CANH) is an independent local charity providing a free, confidential information and advice service. They provide the advice people need for the problems they face, and improve the policies and practices that affect people's lives. They rely heavily on volunteers and are equipped to respond to any issue, covering areas including benefits, debt, employment and housing amongst many others. Their advice is delivered face-to-face from 12 outlets, including housing offices, community centres, county courts, food banks, as well as via telephone, email and access to reliable online information.

They are seeking a contribution to the fit out of a new head office in Letchworth following a move to new premises. The relocation is required as they more space and a secure long-term home. The current Letchworth office has a tiny waiting room, not enough interview rooms, no training room and nowhere near enough desk space for staff and volunteers. The current rent is £18,000 per year and the landlord wants to raise it to £25,000. The current 3 year lease ends in June 2016. The new premises in 49 Station Road is owned by the Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation and offers much better value for money with approximately twice the floor area for £19,800 per year on a 15 year lease. It will enable an increase from 3 to 5 interview rooms to see more face-to-face clients, double the Advice line phone capacity, and train more volunteers. More efficient hot-desking is planned in order to maximise use of office space. Demand from clients has risen by 30% over the past two years, and volunteer numbers have risen over 10% over the past 6 months. They aim to double the number of advice calls handled to 2,000 per year, dramatically increase the amount of financial capability training offered to reduce debt issues, and expand the provision of energy advice to relieve fuel poverty and improve energy efficiency. It will enable them to continue their core work to support the most vulnerable people across North Hertfordshire with benefits, debt, housing, employment and family issues.

The new premises contains the last remaining original Parker and Unwin shop front in Letchworth, and the Heritage Foundation has agreed to pay for an external refurbishment and internal strip out of the building, to include new heritage windows and restoration of the original shop front. The CANH will pay for the creation of four new interview rooms, flooring, lighting, power and data, additional desks, chairs and telephones, security alarm, an accessible toilet, as well as upgrades to kitchen, toilets, heating and ventilation systems.

CANH are seeking grant funding of £20,000 from North Hertfordshire District Council towards the cost of the fixtures and fittings for the new premises.

The Letchworth head office is open for drop-in five mornings a week and appointments in the afternoons. The new premises will have a much bigger waiting room, 5 interview rooms instead of 3 and a dedicated training and Adviceline room as well as more office space generally. This will make it possible to recruit more volunteers, see more clients, answer more calls, and offer more preventative work such as financial capability training to reduce debt issues, and energy advice to reduce fuel poverty and improve energy efficiency. It will also assist the organisation by providing a secure foundation on which they can build to diversify the funding for the future.

Members should be aware that, North Hertfordshire District Council currently provides the CANH with a three yearly Memorandum of Understanding of £145,430 towards the annual running costs, in addition a further £25,000 annually towards the cost of a court worker. There are also in-kind contributions in terms of rate relief of approximately £20,000 on three premises in Letchworth, Hitchin and Royston. Also rent subsidies, in-kind contribution of maintenance on the NHDC premises at Thomas Bellamy House in Hitchin and Royston Town Hall Annex, as outlined below:

Level of Subsidised Rents

Thomas Bellamy House & Royston Town Hall Annex 6,000 per site

Service Charges (In Kind)

Thomas Bellamy House £4,482 & Royston Town Hall Annex £8,804

Comparison with other Hertfordshire authorities has demonstrated a continuing desire by the majority of authorities to maintain adequate funding for CAB advice services, albeit the amounts vary considerably from authority to authority. The population statistics also give a very approximate indication of potential level of demand for the services provided, but much will depend on levels of deprivation, priority areas for the individual authority i.e. homelessness, levels of debt etc.

For 2014/15, figures were

District / Borough	Population	Funding provided to CAB	Other info
North Herts	131,000	£145,430	plus (as stated above)
Broxbourne	95,700	£144,000	plus £39k for specialist (housing) court worker
Stevenage	86,000	£170,000	
East Herts	143,000	£129,000	(13/14 figures)
Hertsmere	102,400	£215,000	
Dacorum	149,700	£172,000	
Welwyn Hatfield	116,000	£80,750	
Watford	95,500	£243,692	
Three Rivers	90,400	£297,340	

The above table may be of assistance to Members in order to set the local figures into a County wide context. In discussions between senior officers the CANH board of trustees, the CANH were reluctant to consider any arrangement with NHDC to use a floor of the Council Offices for their operations as they preferred to maintain a visible 'independence' from the council for their clients (albeit such arrangements exist at authorities such as St Albans). Consequently this course of action would not have proved practical, as the timescale for the completion of the newly refurbished Council

Offices would be too late for the relocation of the CANH due to the lease at their current premises ceasing prior to this date.

(As outlined in recommendation 2.5, Appendix 7)

8.2 **Community Update**

8.2.1 Wilbury Community Forum

The committee of the Wilbury Community Forum (WCF) consider themselves extremely lucky as they benefit from great number of local volunteers who also recruit family and friends from further afield.

At one of the recent community cafés an attendance of 124 was informally recorded, with approximately 80 people on average at one time. The majority in attendance were Wilbury residents including 20 members of the Youth Council

The Wilbury Youth Council has attracted 7 new members and, 3 people have joined the Trustees following the Annual General Meeting.

WCF have initiated the Wilbury Youth Council. This comprises of young people who are supporting the core offer of WCF the café and doing occasional outreach one off events in response to their perceived idea of need (with Trustees researching this, agreeing then supporting if approved).

Michael Elias and New Youth Foundation Workshop are running a Digital Music Youth Service in Wilbury for 1 year on Tuesdays 5.00pm – 7.00pm for 9-16 year olds at the Scout Hut on Icknield Way.

8.2.2 Jackmans Community Centre – Old Library Redevelopment

Following the agreement by the Letchworth Committee to support the provision of further Section 106 funds to the project, the second phase to complete the redevelopment will commence at the start of January 2016 and it is hoped that the building will be operational from the beginning of March.

8.2.3 Update on Jackie's Drop In

The volunteers running Jackie's Drop In have been informed that they are to vacate St Michaels House sometime in February 2016. They hope to ensure that there will be no gap in their provision and worry that the new building (on the corner of West View) will not be operational in time.

The Community Officer has attended meetings with representatives from Jackie's Drop In and the LGCHF and it is doubtful that LGCHF, who are fully supportive of the valuable work of the Drop In, would allow this to happen and are working to ensure that there is no gap in provision. Jackie's Drop In envisage a phased move over to the new building in order to ease the transition for their client group (Adults with learning disabilities) who may have difficulties in dealing with change.

Officers continue to support and advise the group during this time.

8.2.4 Grange Youth Wing

The Trustees of the Grange Youth Club have notified NHDC officers that they are no longer able to operate the building. Officers are working in partnership with Youth Connexions to take over the operation of the building in order to maintain the services for young people that currently take place three evenings per week including providing the opportunity to take part in the Duke of Edinburgh awards. It is hoped that staff and volunteers can continue the Youth Connexions provision in the building as the Youth Club is regarded as the most successful club in the District and quite probably the County.

8.2.5 Update on previous grants awarded

Hitchin Kings Basketball Club – Girls Team

The account bank statements from last year showing the grant awarded last year (Dec14 to May15) have been received by the Community Officer.

As most transactions by the club over that period had been made by cash it is difficult to trace payments from the bank statements.

Although the setting up of girls' team last year proved unsuccessful the club has made assurances that funding for that use has been re-directed to cover the cost of court hire and kit in order to further develop the club.

Officers will ensure that for the recent grant awarded in December 2015 receipts will be provided for all equipment purchased.

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 but excluding grants for district-wide activities. The Committee has delegated powers, as a body, to allocate discretionary budgets and devolved budgets within the terms determined by the Council.

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. This may be for, or otherwise than 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 K and Y Activities – Grant Report
- 15.3 Appendix 3 Letchworth Garden City Rugby Club – Grant Report
- 15.4 Appendix 4 Letchworth Caribbean Harmony Group – Grant Report
- 15.5 Appendix 5 Letchworth Town Centre Partnership – Grant Report
- 15.6 Appendix 6 Letchworth Garden City Festival Steering Committee – Grant Report
- 15.7 Appendix 7 Citizens Advice North Herts Grant Report – Grant Report

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17. BACKGROUND PAPERS
None