

**TITLE OF REPORT: CHAMPION NEWS AND FINANCE REPORT**

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF POLICY, PARTNERSHIPS &amp; COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To advise the Committee of the activities and schemes with which the Community Development Officer has been involved during the past month.
- 1.2 To bring to the Committee's attention some important community based activities that will be taking place during the next few months.

**2. FORWARD PLAN**

- 2.1 This report does not contain a recommendation on a key decision and has not been referred to in the Forward Plan.

**3. PROJECT/ACTIVITY/SCHEME DETAILS****3.1 Community support**

Discussions have continued about hedge reduction in Cherry Drive, and information has been passed to the Highways Area Engineer.

CDO has been in discussion with the Chairman of the Royston Arts Festival about insurance issues and suggested some ways forward;

CDO has advised Royston Allotment and Garden Association (RAGA) about a replacement society clubhouse.

CDO has assisted Reed Parish Council regarding more eco-friendly information distribution, and about a Parish Plan.

**3.2 Meetings attended**

CDO attended the Royston First Advisory Council meeting on January 29<sup>th</sup>.

CDO attended the Fish Hill Enhancement workshop on February 2<sup>nd</sup>.

CDO attended a Royston Youth Network meeting on February 10<sup>th</sup>.

**3.3 Members Surgeries**

The most recent surgery took place on Saturday February 13<sup>th</sup>. Cllr. Robert Smith was in attendance as a Town Councillor, Cllrs Hill and Hunter as District and County Councillors, Cllrs Beardwell as a District and Town Councillor and Cllr. Marshall as a District Councillor. Despite the snow flurries there were 10 specific issues: bird fouling, refuse collection, two highways issues (a dropped kerb request - CDO later visited on site - and traffic flow in Melbourn Street), three plant management issues (overgrowth on paths, lanes and cemeteries), one Environmental Health noise issue, one bus service issue, and one housing issue.

#### 3.4 **Local Dementia Respite Care Provision**

Members will recall there was discussion and a presentation on this topic at the last meeting. A letter was written to HCC's Adult Care Services to clarify levels of provision, and a response has been received. This notes an increase of 111 hours per week of care time at Richard Cox House (run by Quantum Care), though noting the impact of several incidents of flu and sickness on staffing levels. A number of issues have been addressed to improve the effectiveness of staffing provision within the home.

With regard to Mary Barfield Home, the response is less clear, noting only that whilst the Adult Care Services can make recommendations about such issues as staffing levels, the ultimate decision rests with the operator, Springfield Housing Association. The letter does suggest that staffing levels in the 2009/10 year were as contracted.

#### 3.5 **Bus services**

Coombelands has been mentioned in the context of an extension to the shuttle bus which is currently funded by Royston First. An extension such as this is more complex than might at first seem likely, but negotiations are taking place between Royston First and Hertfordshire County Council.

#### 3.6 **Angel Pavement**

The CDO met with the Town Manager and the Area Highways Engineer at Angel Pavement on February 22 to discuss materials. It was agreed at that meeting to get a costing for Angel Pavement based on the same materials as used in the High Street. Accordingly, the specifications were located and passed to the Highways Engineer.

#### 3.7 **Priory Memorial Gardens**

Following an incident in the Gardens when a small child left the infants' play area, a suggestion was made that a gate be fitted to the infants' play area to prevent this happening again. Officers will investigate this incident, but it may be that the provision of a secure gate immediately adjacent to the public conveniences could avert future such 'escapes' and facilitate greater control during public events in the Memorial Gardens.

#### 3.8 **Citizenship**

To date classes have been held in Tannery Drift, St.Mary's Catholic and Roysia Schools. A report will be brought back to this Committee after the remaining classes have taken place.

#### 3.9 **Fish Hill Square, Royston Enhancement Update**

3.9.1 The Royston Town Centre Strategy was adopted in June 2008. The aim of the Strategy is to provide a comprehensive framework to promote integrated development and enhancement of the Royston town centre over the next 10 to 15 years that will seek to benefit the future economic viability and vitality of the town centre while emphasising its historic character and local identity as a market town. The Action Plan that was adopted as part of the Strategy identified a number of Opportunity Sites – one of which is Fish Hill Square at the northern end of Market Hill and Fish Hill.

3.9.2 A workshop was held on 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2010 with local businesses and residents in Meridian school. The workshop raised awareness of the proposal to enhance Fish Hill Square and gave stakeholders the opportunity to raise any issues or aspirations for the square. Feedback from the stakeholder workshop will be made available on the NHDC web site.

- 3.9.3 Fugro Aperio Ltd have been appointed to undertake a ground penetration survey in Fish Hill Square. This will identify the location of underground services. Works are due to be carried out during the day on the 8<sup>th</sup> and overnight on the 9<sup>th</sup> March.
- 3.9.4 We are currently inviting expressions of interest from consultants who are able to design and supervise the enhancement of Fish Hill Square in Royston. The closing date for expressions of interest is 8<sup>th</sup> March after which they will be assessed and a short-list of consultants will be chosen who will be asked to tender for the work. It is anticipated that a consultant will be appointed in May 2010.

#### **4. FINANCE REPORT**

- 4.1 The budget sheets are attached as Appendix A.
- 4.2 A grant application has been received from the County Council's Royston Extended Schools Co-ordinator to support room hire for a drop-in art event, and from the Rotary Club of Royston for support funding of the annual kite festival. These applications are attached as Appendices B & C.

An application was received from Royston District Scouts for support for centenary celebrations. This sought funding for several ineligible items and contained major arithmetical errors: efforts to contact the applicant by email and telephone have not yet proved successful.

- 4.3 The Chairman of the Area Committee has proposed a subsidy of free parking after 3.30pm in those car parks in Royston controlled by NHDC. This is attached as Appendix D.
- 4.4 Given current financial pressures, Members may wish to consider any re-allocation of the Capital Visioning funds.

#### **5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The Committee has delegated powers to administer funds from the budgets described.
- 5.2 There are no other legal implications pertinent to this report.

#### **6. FINANCIAL AND RISK IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 Members are asked to note the information detailed in Appendix A of the report, which relates to the Area Committee budget balances for the current financial year 2009/10.
- 6.2 The spreadsheet also details the pre-allocations carried forward from the previous financial year 2008/09 to the current financial year 2009/10.

#### **7. HUMAN RESOURCE AND EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 There are no human resource and equalities implications pertinent to this report.

#### **8. CONSULTATION WITH EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS AND WARD MEMBERS**

- 8.1 Consultation with Members has occurred in connection with the allocation of funds for Community Projects.

- 8.2 Consultation with the respective officers and external agencies / groups has taken place with regard to the funding proposals for Area Committee Discretionary Development Funds.

## **9. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 9.1 That the Committee notes the reports under Paragraph 3 above;
- 9.2 That the Committee considers the grant application from Royston Town Council towards the Easter Drop-in Art Session;
- 9.3 That the Committee considers the grant application from the Royston Kite Festival, using the remaining funds available in the current financial year and any funds necessary from the 20010-11 financial year;
- 9.4 That the Committee considers the proposal from the Chairman to subsidise free parking in NHDC-controlled car parks in Royston after 3.30 pm;
- 9.3 That the Committee endorses the actions taken by the Community Development Officer to promote greater community capacity and well-being.

## **10. REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION**

- 10.1 To ensure that the Committee are kept informed of the work of the Community Development Officer.

## **11. CONTACT OFFICER**

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