

TITLE OF REPORT: CHAMPION NEWS & FINANCE REPORT**REPORT OF THE HEAD OF POLICY AND COMMUNITY SERVICES****1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To advise the Committee of the activities and schemes with which the Community Development Officer has been involved.
- 1.2 To bring to the Committee's attention some important community based activities that will be taking place during the next few months.
- 1.3 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.
- 1.4 To advise the Committee on the current expenditure and balances of the Area Committee delegated budgets.

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 The majority of the CDO's work since the last meeting has involved allocation of volunteer stewards to the visit of the Olympic Torch. The recruitment of volunteers has been the responsibility of a colleague, but a new database was constructed to enable volunteers to be allocated to the various zones of the run quickly, and even if necessary on the day of the run itself, whilst recording all data necessary for security purposes.
- 3.2 **Graffiti Wall**
CDO is seeking costings for the installation of a graffiti wall, following a generous offer by a local business. The costs will include not just the preparation of a paintable surface, but the tidying of the site and the provision of some safety railings, and some educational input. The CDO will also consult with other users of the site to check for potential conflicts of use.
- 3.3 **Murals**
Members will recall that young people designed a group of murals, currently on display on hoardings around the site of the former cinema. It has been suggested that these murals deserve a safer, longer-term future, and one potential location might be the new railway underpass.

3.4 **Railway Underpass**

The CDO attended the opening ceremony on June 27th, and took some photographs of the event. It was also suggested during the construction phase that a community mural project might decorate the underpass after completion.

Such a project was undertaken at a road underpass at Southfields in Letchworth, where artists were engaged to consult with the community, draw up a design brief, design the mural and assist the community to paint it. Several years on, the mural still exists and has suffered some minor additional graffiti.

The CDO is investigating the costs of a possible similar project for the railway underpass, as it would enhance the community's ownership of the underpass and serve to protect it in the longer term against ransom graffiti and tagging. Such a project might include the 'cinema' murals discussed in Para 3.3 above.

3.5 **Other Work**

- 3.5.1 The CDO attended a meeting of the Royston Youth Network on July 5th. The Network is informal and meets quarterly to discuss current issues and projects relating to young people in and around Royston, to provide opportunities for collaboration and the avoidance of duplication. Its membership includes Cllr Hill, Town Councillor Lindsay Davidson, NHDC Children's Development staff, PCSOs, Police, Cathy Curtis of the Community Hub, and the Town Centre Manager.

Recent changes in Police staffing arrangements have resulted in less Police involvement in the Network than hitherto, which is regrettable. The recent meeting discussed a variety of 2012 issues and a proposal for an additional Community Forum as a legacy of the 2012 celebrations.

- 3.5.2 Letters of thanks have been received from Royston Methodist Church and Barkway Community Group for the grants made to them for Jubilee Celebrations. Mrs Pooley said "*The grant made a positive contribution to the event. The Village Hall was transformed ; the band gave it a happy atmosphere and we transported ourselves to the Lyons Corner Houses of 1952.*"

4. **FUNDING DECISIONS TO BE MADE / CONSIDERED**

- 4.1 A spreadsheet showing the detailed spend to date of the Area Committee Development budget is enclosed as Appendix A. Following Members' comments, this spreadsheet has been re-formatted to combine the "Development" and "Small Area Grant" budgets.
- 4.2 A grant application has been received from the Royal British Legion (Royston Branch) for support for building improvements, and is attached as Appendix B.
- 4.3 A grant application has been received from Home Start Royston & S. Cambs. for support for Royston sessions, and is attached as Appendix C.
- 4.4 A grant application has been received from NHDC Children's Services Team for support for HangOut club, and is attached as Appendix D.
- 4.5 The CDO is aware of other grant applications in train but not yet received, these will be "to follow".
- 4.6 Members may wish to consider re-allocation of the balance of £1,856 originally allocated to Royston Town Council for works at the Town Hall – they will recall that the Town Council has since received a substantial tranche of Section 106 funding for those works.

- 4.7 Members may also wish to consider re-allocating the un-paid charge of £342 for a re-print of the Royston Town Trail. An invoice was first requested in the 2009-10 financial year, and in subsequent years, but no invoice has ever been received. It is suggested that this sum be returned to the budget for future allocation to a project.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Terms of Reference in relation to Area Committees confirm that they may establish and maintain relationships with outside bodies/voluntary organisations which includes discretionary grant aid/financial support. However, this does not include grants for district wide activities.
- 5.2 Section 2 Local Government Act 2000 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.
- 5.3 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.
- 5.4 The Committee has delegated powers to administer funds from the budgets described.

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 2010/11.
- 6.2 The spreadsheet also details the pre-allocations carried forward from the previous financial year 2011/12 to the current financial year 2012/13.
- 6.3 Balances relating to allocated Visioning Budgets available within the Royston & District area have been removed from the spreadsheet, as these monies have been spent.

7. HUMAN RESOURCE AND EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The local MoUs are managed by the Community Development Officer as part of the regular work programme.
- 7.2 The great majority of the voluntary and community projects that are funded by the Council have equality and social inclusion as a key objective of their purpose. Such projects work very closely with and for the more disadvantaged and potentially socially excluded within our communities.
- 7.3 All activities undertaken by the Council, its committees, Community Development officers or agencies working on its behalf are to be conducted in accordance with the NHDC Corporate Equality Strategy and relevant Equalities legislation.

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 endorses the actions taken by the Community Development Officer to promote greater community capacity and well-being.
- 9.2 That the Committee considers making a grant award of £1,500 to the Royal British Legion (Royston Branch) for support for building improvements.
- 9.3 That the Committee considers making a grant award of £1,000 to Home Start Royston & S. Cambs. for support for their Royston sessions.
- 9.4 That the Committee considers making a grant award of £1,400 to NHDC Children's Services Team for support for the HangOut club.

10. REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 10.1 To ensure that the Committee are kept informed of the work of the Community Development Officer.
- 10.2 This report is intended simply 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.
- 10.3 The awarding of financial assistance to voluntary organisations and the use of discretionary spending allows the Committee to further the aims and Strategic Priorities of the Council.
- 10.4 The allocation of funds will improve the services provided by local organisations and groups that are available and accessed by members of the community.

11. APPENDICES

- 11.1 Appendix A – Finance spreadsheet.
- 11.2 Appendix B - Grant Form, Royal British Legion (Royston Branch)
- 11.3 Appendix C - Grant Form, Home Start Royston & S. Cambs.
- 11.4 Appendix D - Grant Form, NHDC Children's Services Team.

12. CONTACT OFFICER

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