

Public Document Pack

22 February 2019

Our Ref Hitchin Committee
Your Ref.
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To: Members of the Committee: Councillor Ian Albert, Councillor Clare Billing, Councillor Judi Billing MBE, Councillor Val Bryant, Councillor Paul Clark, Councillor Sam Collins, Councillor Elizabeth Dennis-Harburg, Councillor Nicola Harris, Councillor Simon Harwood, Councillor Mike Hughson, Councillor Bernard Lovewell, Councillor Martin Stears-Handscorn and Councillor Richard Thake

You are invited to attend a

MEETING OF THE HITCHIN COMMITTEE

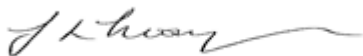
to be held in the

**PETER MORRISON HALL, BENSLOW MUSIC SCHOOL,
BENSLOW LANE, HITCHIN, HERTFORDSHIRE**

On

TUESDAY, 5TH MARCH, 2019 AT 7.30 PM

Yours sincerely,



Jeanette Thompson
Service Director – Legal and Community

Agenda **Part I**

Item	Page
1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE	
2. MINUTES - 4 DECEMBER 2018 To take as read and approve as a true record the minutes of the meeting of this Committee held on the 4 December 2018. <i>To follow.</i>	
3. NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS Members should notify the Chairman of other business which they wish to be discussed by the Committee at the end of the business set out in the agenda. They must state the circumstances which they consider justify the business being considered as a matter of urgency. The Chairman will decide whether any item(s) raised will be considered.	
4. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS Members are reminded that any declarations of interest in respect of any business set out in the agenda, should be declared as either a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest or Declarable Interest and are required to notify the Chairman of the nature of any interest declared at the commencement of the relevant item on the agenda. Members declaring a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest must withdraw from the meeting for the duration of the item. Members declaring a Declarable Interest, wished to exercise a 'Councillor Speaking Right', must declare this at the same time as the interest, move to the public area before speaking to the item and then must leave the room before the debate and vote.	
5. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION To receive petitions and presentations from members of the public including: 1. Hitchin Bid Manager 2. Rhythms of the World Grant Funding Applications: 3. Home-Start Hertfordshire 4. Hitchin Allotment Association 5. Walsworth Festival 6. Hitchin Food Rescue Hub	
6. HITCHIN BID MANAGER To receive an oral presentation from the Hitchin BID Manager.	

7. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

To receive an oral presentation update on Rhythms of the World.

**8. GRANTS & COMMUNITY UPDATE
REPORT OF THE COMMUNITIES MANAGER**

(Pages 5
- 18)

To advise the Committee on the current expenditure and balances of the
Area Committee budgets.

To bring to the Committee's attention details of recent requests received for
Area Committee Grant Funding, made by community groups and local
organisations.

**9. WARD MATTERS AND OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS - MEMBERS'
REPORTS**

To receive any oral reports from Members regarding Ward matters and
Outside Organisations.

10. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION AT FUTURE MEETINGS

To receive suggestions for Items to be discussed at future meetings from
Members of the Committee.

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**HITCHIN COMMITTEE
5 MARCH 2019**

PUBLIC DOCUMENT

TITLE OF REPORT: GRANTS & COMMUNITY UPDATE

**REPORT OF THE COMMUNITIES MANAGER
EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND RURAL AFFAIRS**

**PRIORITY: ATTRACTIVE AND THRIVING / PROSPER AND PROTECT / RESPONSIVE
AND EFFICIENT**

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 To advise the Committee on the current expenditure and balances of the Area Committee 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 That the Committee considers allocating funding from their discretionary community budget towards the projects below:
- 2.2 **£1,500** to Walsworth Festival Committee to underwrite the cost of the annual community event as outlined in 8.1.1
- 2.3 **£930** to Allotment Association towards the cost of developing the youth allotment as outlined in 8.1.2

- 2.4 **£2,300** to Home-Start Herts towards the cost of supporting 5 families in need in Hitchin as outlined in 8.1.3
- 2.5 **£2,000** to Hitchin Food Rescue Hub towards the cost of setting up as outlined in 8.1.4
- 2.6 That the Committee endorses the actions taken by the Community Officer to promote greater community capacity and well-being for Hitchin.

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 by assisting in the effective financial management of the Area Committee's budget. This ensures that all actions are performed in line with the Authority's Financial Regulations, the Council's Constitution, and the guidance of the existing Grants policy as agreed by Cabinet in June 2016.
- 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 Corporate Plan.

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 included within this report.

5. CONSULTATION WITH RELEVANT MEMBERS AND EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS

- 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 bodies/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 With reference to the Council's Constitution, Section 9.3 Area Committees will include budgets for the purpose of providing grants and discretionary budgets that may be used within the area of the Committee for economic, social and environmental well-being. Under the current grant criteria there is no upper limit outlined for the amount of grant funding to be allocated which can be decided at the Committee's discretion.
- 7.2 Members are asked to note the information detailed in Appendix 1. Hitchin Area Committee Budget Spread sheet, which relates to the Area Committee budget balances for 2018/19. The spreadsheet also details pre-allocated sums carried forward from the previous financial years, including balances and past expenditure.

8. RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS

8.1 Grant Applications

8.1.1

Applicant	Walsworth Festival Committee
Project	Walsworth Festival (community event)
Sum requested	£1,500
Total project cost	£4,500
Match funding	£3000 income from stall pitches and sponsorship
Annual expenditure	£3,808
Funds held	£2,902 as of July 2018
Previous support	£1000 granted in 2017
NHDC Policy met	Yes
Strategic objective met	Attractive & Thriving

The funding is required to underwrite the cost of putting on the annual Walsworth Festival on Walsworth Common that will take place this year on Sunday 10th May. The event brings the local community together not only from Walsworth but Town wide. It provides an opportunity for local charities and organisations to promote their activities and raise funds by hiring stalls.

It also provides performance opportunities for local clubs and performing groups to raise their profile.

It raises the profile of both the local church St Faiths and the Walsworth Community Centre as some of the activities take place within those facilities.

The festival has taken place on the Sunday of the 1st May bank holiday since 1975 and is a very valued event in the life of Hitchin residents.

8.1.2

Applicant	Hitchin Allotment Association
Project	Further development of the youth allotment.
Sum requested	£930
Total project cost	£930
Match funding	All the fund raising activities cover the cost of annual running costs
Annual expenditure	£774.55 (as of March 2018)
Funds held	£749
Previous support	£500 granted in 2016
NHDC Policy met	Yes
Strategic objective met	Attractive & Thriving, Responsive & Efficient

The group's priority for 2019 is to complete the renovation and set up of the youth allotment plots to maximise the benefits for the children participating, and learning from their experience over the past two years of what works and what engages the children.

Therefore:

1. Child friendly compost bins, with easy access and removable panels to view the composting process (£250)
2. Create a second study/work area with folding, removable tables (£350)
3. Renovation/build of the fruit cage area (£80)
4. Funding to fully establish cooking activities (they ran a successful pilot in 2017 to test its viability) (£250)

Total: £930 for project/development costs.

General running costs are covered via fundraising activities. Over 180 children are involved in this project and are highly engaged.

As follows:

Fortnightly sessions, term time, for 12 SEN supported students each year from Priory Secondary School. Sessions last between 90 and 120 minutes. The school have reported significant benefits for these pupils in terms of engagement, confidence and learning.

They run a popular, weekly, after school 'growing and cooking' club with a fully trained Food Technology Teacher. 12 children are involved. They will be undertaking 90 minute sessions. This started as a fortnightly activity but the children were so engaged they requested weekly.

There are seven Guide, Brownie and Cub groups from Hitchin using the facility. Usually 4/6 evening sessions a year per group (March to November)
18 - 40 children per pack (larger groups split into two sessions)

This year the group will be liaising with the Hertfordshire County Council youth service to extend the offer to other children in most need in and around Hitchin.

They also run family sessions during school holidays for the keenest students.

They will renovate the fruit area, installing a study/work area compost bins as soon as possible in the spring of 2019 so the whole site is fully operational for the 2019 season. The food/cooking activities will run across the year with initial spend up front to purchase key items.

8.1.3

Applicant	Home-Start Hertfordshire
Project	Support vulnerable families in Hitchin
Sum requested	£2,300 = £460 x 5 families
Total project cost	£6,900 = 15 families across the District
Match funding	Requested from Letchworth, Baldock and Southern Rural.
Annual expenditure	£344,857 (as of March 2018)
Funds held	£113,000 (as of March 2018)
Previous support	None – support has been provided to Home-start North Herts which is now part of Home-start Hertfordshire
NHDC Policy met	Yes
Strategic objective met	Attractive & Thriving, Responsive & Efficient

Home-Start Hertfordshire was created when the Herts County Council withdraw core funding from the each of the Home-start organisations including Home-Start North Herts. The service was able to continue by joining together to form a County wide provision. Although NHDC have provided grant funding to Home-Start North Herts in the past (their last grant was awarded in 2015) we have not yet provided funds to Home Start Herts.

The charity provides local, family-support that offers emotional and practical help to parents with at least one child under 12. Their team of trained volunteer family mentors visit families in their own home, building trusted relationships and providing focused support that is tailored to the family's individual needs. In addition to other areas of the County they operate widely across North Herts apart from Royston which is covered by Home-Start South Cams.

This grant is required in order to help families who are currently waiting for support in North Herts. This grant would allow the use trained volunteers from the local community, to support families in their own homes for up to 3 months.. As part of their service, families are sign posted to other organisations such as local family groups, Citizens Advice, Mental health teams, Family Centres, Safer Places and Housing Associations.

They are currently supporting 16 families in North Herts. However, there are still 15 families in the North Herts area that are waiting for much needed support. These are as follows;

Baldock – 2 families = (£ 920)

Hitchin – 5 families = (£2,300)

Letchworth – 6 families = (£ 2,760)

Southern Rural – 2 families (£ 920)

Working with families to support them and signposting them onto other organisations, allows them to thrive and improves their wellbeing. The support provided is inclusive, families or parents can self refer or may be referred via health or social services. Home-start's main objective as a charity is that they are dedicated to helping parents be the best they can be, so that their children can have the best possible start in life. They have had many parents in the past who have become Home-Start volunteers after receiving our support and so have been able to give something back to help other families in the local community.

8.1.4

Applicant	Hitchin Food Rescue Hub
Project	Set up costs for new organisation
Sum requested	£2,000
Total project cost	£2,150
Match funding	Pending £150 from Churches Together and HCC
Annual expenditure	N/A
Funds held	N/A
Previous support	None
NHDC Policy met	Yes
Strategic objective met	Attractive & Thriving, Responsive & Efficient

The Hitchin Food Rescue Hub is about to commence activities based on the model of highly successful 'Best Before Café' that has been operating for the last 12 months in Letchworth.

The main objective of the project is to act as a 'food boutique' which redistributes food that would otherwise end up in landfill. The customers leave donations for items taken and food & drink consumers on a PAYF (pay as you feel) basis. Opportunities for the community to make new and practice environmentally motivated (waste reduction, wholefood nutrition, community engagement, volunteerism) behaviours.

The group are in the process of confirming a venue to operate from. This is hoped to be Church House as it's the most central community facility available. The café will operate one day per week, most likely Thursday's as the Letchworth Café operates on Wednesdays. Although the projects are using the same model and share experiences and best practice, financially both projects are independent from each other.

The funding is to cover the cost of starting up the project and will assist with equipment, signage, web page, volunteer training, etc. Launching the project, visitor resources (children, cooking/nutrition/various community assistance), engagement related costs.

The secondary benefits of the project in addition to saving food waste are many fold and include:

Reduced social isolation & loneliness
Rural engagement
Community hub/networking/befriending
Multigenerational and mixed socio-economic space
Food insecurity and poverty alleviation
Healthy lifestyle promotion

8.2 Update on Previous Grants awarded and Community Engagement

8.2.1 Feed Up, Warm Up

Following work from the Communities Team to support the setting up of Feed Up, Warm up, the group are now fully established with a regular Wednesday evening provision for any one who is homeless, sofa surfing or sleeping rough. They are based at the scout hut to the rear of the Catholic Church just off Grove Road. They currently have approximately 700 volunteers and are undertaking outreach work as well as the Wednesday provision. They are also helping with the set up of a similar project in Stevenage.

The founder of the project Shane Cole is about to receive the Chairman's Volunteer Award under the 'Caring' category and has been nominated for a Comet Community Award.

They have been so successful in raising funds and getting donations from the local community they have not needed to request grant funding from the area committee as yet.

8.2.2 Rhythms of the World

ROTW have their annual AGM on Monday 18th February at 7.00pm at Club 85 on Whinbush Road in Hitchin. Following liaison with members of the current management committee (at the time of writing) I understand that plans for an event this year will be restricted to a concert to be held at Hitchin Town Hall.

The planned community event in 2018 was curtailed due to issues with the licence application but successfully went ahead utilising the local pubs and venues.

Officers will be attending the AGM and will be able to feed back further following that meeting..

8.3 Highways Matters

- 8.3.1 This section is included within the community update report for each committee cycle to facilitate debate and enable appropriate feedback on any of the proposed or listed Highways related schemes.

Any new proposals or revised schemes 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 Area Committees also have delegated power under section 9.8.1 (a) & (b) to allocate discretionary budgets and devolved budgets within the terms determined by the Council and outlined in the current Grant Policy agreed by Cabinet in June 2016. Section 9.8.2 (g) of the Constitution in respect of Area Committees' Terms of Reference provides that they may: "establish and maintain relationships with outside bodies/voluntary organisations operating specifically with the area including, where appropriate, the provision of discretionary grant aid/financial support etc. but excluding grants for district-wide activities".
- 9.2 Chapter 1, s1-8 of the Localism Act 2011 provides a General Power of Competence which gives local authorities the powers to do anything provided that it is not specifically prohibited in legislation.
- 9.3 Section 137 of the 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 As outlined in Appendix A Committee budget 2018/19:-

The agreed budget for this financial year is £13,700 with an additional £1,800 from the transfer of Member Allowances. Equating to a total amount of £15,500

All carry forward amounts from 2017/18 have been fully utilised

A total of £4,542 has been spent from the 2018/19 budget leaving a total available of **£10,958**

- 10.2 Should Members be minded to provide grant funding as requested under recommendation 2.1 the total awarded will equate to **£6,730** this would leave an amount of £2,228 to carry over for allocation in next financial year's budget.

11. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 There are no relevant risk entries that have been recorded on Pentana Risk, the Council's performance and risk system. Individual events should have their own risk assessments in place to mitigate any health and safety issues. Whenever a request for grant funding for equipment is received, the recipient of the funding will be advised to obtain insurance for the item to avoid a repeat request for funding in the event of the equipment being stolen or damaged. There are no pertinent risk implications for the Authority associated with any items within this report.

12. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1 In line with the Public Sector Equality Duty, public bodies must, in the exercise of their 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.
- 12.2 Area committee funding is awarded to community groups that clearly demonstrate positive impact on the community and wider environment. The projects outlined in this report seek to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

13. SOCIAL VALUE IMPLICATIONS

- 13.1 The Social Value Act and "go local" policy do not apply to this report.

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 - 2018/19 financial year budget sheet

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.

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HITCHIN COMMITTEE BUDGET 2018/19

BUDGET BROUGHT FORWARD FROM 2017/18

SUMMARY/ TOTALS	Funding	Allocated	Spent	Outstanding	Unallocated Budget
Central Area Grants	£14,534	£14,534	£14,534	£0	£0
Total	£14,534	£14,534	£14,534	£0	£0

HITCHIN AREA COMMITTEE BUDGET 2018/19

SUMMARY/ TOTALS	Funding	Allocated	Spent	Outstanding	Unallocated Budget
Central Area Grants	£15,500	£4,542	£4,542	£0	£10,958
Total	£15,500	£4,542	£4,542	£0	£10,958

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