

Publication Date

Our Ref Royston and District Area Forum/6
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To: Members of the Committee: Councillor Ruth Brown (Chair), Councillor Chris Hinchliff, Councillor Adam Compton and Councillor Chris Hinchliff (Vice-Chair), Councillor Matt Barnes, Councillor Cathy Brownjohn, Councillor Bryony May and Councillor Gerald Morris

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN OF A

MEETING OF THE ROYSTON AND DISTRICT AREA FORUM

to be held in the

**HARDWICKE HALL, TOWN HALL, MELBOURN STREET,
ROYSTON, SG8 7BZ**

On

WEDNESDAY, 6TH SEPTEMBER, 2023 AT 7.30 PM

Yours sincerely,

Jeanette Thompson
Service Director – Legal and Community

****MEMBERS PLEASE ENSURE THAT YOU DOWNLOAD ALL AGENDAS AND REPORTS VIA THE MOD.GOV APPLICATION ON YOUR TABLET BEFORE ATTENDING THE MEETING****

Agenda Part I

Item	Page
1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE	
2. MINUTES - AREA COMMITTEE 23 MARCH 2023 To take as read and approve as a true record the minutes of the meeting of the Area Committee held on the 23 March 2023.	
3. CHAIR'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 Chair 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, wishing 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.	
4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - GRANT APPLICATIONS To consider community grant applications for recommendation to the Executive Member for Community and Partnerships.	
5. GRANTS & COMMUNITY UPDATE To provide the Forum with an update to ensure Members are kept informed of the work of the Community and Partnerships Team.	(Pages 5 - 14)
6. PRESENTATION - RECYCLING & WASTE Presentation by North Herts Council's Executive Member for Recycling & Waste Management, followed by Q&A.	
7. PRESENTATION - COST OF LIVING Presentation by Citizens Advice North Herts about the Cost of Living and the support available.	
8. WARD MATTERS & OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS To receive any verbal reports from Members and members of the public regarding Ward matters and Outside Organisations.	
9. FUTURE AREA FORUMS To discuss topics for future meetings and discuss the virtual winter meetings.	
NOTES FROM THE MEETING	15 - 20

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REPORT (FOR RECOMMENDATION & NOTING BY AREA FORUM)

ROYSTON AREA FORUM
DATE 6 SEPTEMBER 2023

*PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT

SERVICE DIRECTORATE: LEGAL & COMMUNITY

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 To advise the Area Forum on the current expenditure and balances of the Community Grant budget.
- 1.2 To bring to the Forum's attention details of recent requests received for Community grant funding, made by community groups and local organisations.
- 1.3 To enable Forum Members to make recommendations to the Executive Member for Community & Partnerships on grant applications.
- 1.4 To advise the Forum of the activities and schemes with which Community & Partnerships officers have been involved in and some important community-based activities that will take place during the next few months.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Area Forum:

- 2.1. Considers and notes the information within this report.
- 2.2. Makes recommendations to the Executive Member for Community & Partnerships on the grant applications detailed below.
- 2.3. Therfield, Royston and Kelshall Sports Association (TRAKSA) - £1,500 towards car park resurfacing and rainwater harvesting.

3. BACKGROUND/ RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1 The community grant base budget for Royston Area Forum 2023/24 is £6,000.
- 3.2 The budget available for community grants for the Royston area stands at **£5,816**.

4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Following the decision of Full Council on 18 April 2023, an Area Forum shall consider applications for community grants in its area and make recommendations to the Executive Member for Community & Partnerships on them. The Executive Member has delegated authority to make these Executive decisions under section 14.6.8(b)((ii)A 5 of the constitution, in consultation with the Service Director: Legal & Community. That decision will be subject to a 5 clear working day call-in period, following publication in the Members Information Service (MIS) and on the Council's website.
- 4.2 Other issues raised in this report are for information and noting and therefore no direct legal implications arise.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 As outlined in Appendix 1 and under item 3.2 the Community Grant budget available is **£5,816**.
- 5.2 If the application outlined in Appendix 2 is recommended and approved, there would be **£4,316** available for Community Grants for the remainder of the 2023-24 financial year.

6. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no relevant risk entries that have been recorded on Ideagen Risk Management, 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.

7. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 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.
- 7.2 Community Grant funds are 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.

8. SOCIAL VALUE IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The Social Value Act and "go local" policy do not apply to the matters contained within this report, as there are no recommendations on procurement.

9. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The environmental implications of this project will be positive. The rainwater harvesting system will reduce wastewater returning to the wastage system. The harvested water will be used for watering the recreation ground inclusive of a cricket pitch predominantly in the summer months, levels of imported water used to water the grounds will therefore be reduced. This will likely lead to a reduction in water bills. The amount of water collected will be dependent on levels of rainfall and will be useful in dry spells of the weather or periods of restrictions by water companies e.g. hose pipe ban, as there will be a reserve of potentially 1500/1600 litres if the system is at full capacity.

10. HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

10. The activities of the Community & Partnerships team are covered by existing budgets.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 11.1 Terms of Reference for Area Forums, Section 9 of Council Constitution updated May 2023.
- 11.2 Community grants Criteria Policy May 2023.

12. APPENDICES

- 12.1 Appendix 1. Royston Community Grant Budget 23-24
- 12.2 Appendix 2. TRAKSA
- 12.3 Appendix 3. Community Updates

13. CONTACT OFFICERS

13.1 Author

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ROYSTON AREA FORUM BUDGET 2023/24

SUMMARY/ TOTALS	Funding	Allocated or Pending Approval	Spent	Outstanding	Unallocated Budget					
CARRY FORWARD BUDGET 2022/23	£816	£816	£0	£816	£0					
BASE BUDGET 2023/24	£6,000	£184	£0	£184	£5,816					
Total	£6,816	£1,000	£0	£1,000	£5,816					

2022/23	Funding		Project	Allocated or Pending Approval	Date	Spent	Outstanding	Unallocated Amount	Comments
CARRY FORWARD BUDGET 2022/23	£816		Creative Royston - performances at Royston Arts Festival	£816	12-Jul-23	£0	£816		Total Grant £1,000. £184 funded from 2023/24 budget.
							£0		
							£0		
							£0		
Total	£816			£816		£0	£816	£0	

2023/24	Funding		Project	Allocated or Pending Approval	Date	Spent	Outstanding	Unallocated Amount	Comments
BASE BUDGET 2023/24	£6,000		Creative Royston - performances at Royston Arts Festival	£184	12-Jul-23	£0	£184		Total Grant £1,000. £816 funded from 2022/23 carry forward budget.
							£0		
							£0		
							£0		
							£0		
Total	£6,000			£184		£0	£184	£5,816	

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Appendix 2 – Creative Royston

=Document Control:

Version	Issue Date	Changes
1.0		First Draft (BE)

Reference	5127		
Name of Organisation	Therfield, Royston and Kelshall Sports Association (TRAKSA)		
Organisation Type	Club		
Ward	Ermine		
Project Type	Improvements to car park and provision of rainwater harvesting at Therfield Pavilion.		
Green option considered?	Rainwater harvesting can help mitigate flooding, erosion and waste pollution.		
NHC Councillor involvement that may constitute a conflict of interest	None known		
Previous financial support within six years	2021 - £50,000 Capital Grant funding towards Therfield Pavilion		
Documentation reviewed and approved*	Safeguarding	Yes	Accounts
	Demonstrates clear governance	Yes	
Total applied for	£1,500	Total project cost	£6,000
Officer Summary			
<p>Funding is requested towards the cost of improvements to the Therfield Pavilion car park surface to enable easier wheelchair access, provision of rainwater harvesting and a defibrillator.</p> <p>Funds have already been raised via other grants for the defibrillator and it has been purchased. Any monies granted by the Council would be towards the car park resurfacing and rainwater harvesting equipment.</p>			

*Funding will only be released on receipt and approval of all supporting documentation

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Districtwide Community Updates
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Policy & Strategy team have drafted the criteria for the Community Investment Fund with support from the Community Partnerships team. Looking to launch the fund at the beginning of September.• The first meeting of the Wellbeing networking group was held on July 19th.• Commencing planning of the North Herts Heroes awards, which will be launched in November.• Working in partnership with Rotary Club of Hitchin Tilehouse on the Youth Showcase event which will be held on 30 September.• Supporting the Samarivans charity art project.• Coordinating voluntary support response to Asylum Seekers based in North Herts.• Co-ordinating various local and district wide Network Groups including Youth Action, Food Provision, Arts and Culture and Green and Growing Group.• Continuing to facilitate NHC Councillors' Community Surgeries.• Sharing and disseminating information on social media and to mailing lists, keeping in touch with the community, voluntary, statutory and non-statutory agencies.
Area Community Updates
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Community & Partnerships officer has attended the Friends of Therfield Heath and Royston Daycare Centre AGMs, as well as the Community Breakfast.• The Leader and Managing Director of the Council went on Ward walks with councillors in Royston Heath and Meridian.• Working with various groups on grant applications, including the local Brownies and Guides who are looking to renovate their headquarters.• The outdoor exercise equipment at Royston Leisure Centre was officially opened on 17 August. The event was well attended and there were many interesting demonstrations.• Royston Arts Festival runs 22 Sep-1 Oct, featuring a range of talks, exhibitions and workshops, performances – including The Weather Machine which was funded by the Royston Community Grant budget.• Sustain-Ability 2023 is taking place in Priory Memorial Gardens on 30 September alongside the Royston Arts Festival. Representatives from North Herts Council and John O'Conner will be in attendance.

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**North Herts Council
ROYSTON AREA FORUM**

**Meeting held at Royston Town Hall, Melbourn Street, Royston, SG8 7DA
On Wednesday, 6th September 2023 at 7.30pm**

NOTES

Present: Councillor Ruth Brown (RB) (Chair), Councillor Chris Hinchliff (CH) (Vice-Chair), Councillor Matt Barnes (MB), Councillor Cathy Brownjohn (CB), Councillor Bryony May (BM).

In Attendance:

Becca Edwards (BE) (Community and Partnerships Officer) and Cllr Amy Allen (AA) (Executive Member for Recycling and Waste Management)

Also present:

At the commencement of the meeting there were 19 members of the public, including registered speakers.

Meeting started at **7.30pm**

1. Apologies for absence

Cllr Gerald Morris.

2. Chair's Announcements

Cllr Brown welcomed everyone in attendance.

- Highlighted that the Forum is an informal, inclusive meeting to share ideas.
- Members were reminded they are making recommendations and not decisions for grant applications.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Gerald Morris.

3. Public Participation

Becca Edwards, the Community and Partnership Officer, updated Members of community grant budgets.

Cllr May declared an interest as her husband is Chair of the organisation. Cllr May left the room.

Received presentations in support of grant applications by the following:

Nigel Reader (NR) presented the Therfield, Reed and Kelshall Sports Association (TRAKSA) application

Members and members of the public enquired and received satisfactory answers about:

- The percentage of water needs that would be met by the rainwater harvesting.
- The size of the rainwater harvesting receptacle.

MoP asked about what safeguarding is in place to make sure any monies granted by the Council is spent on what has been applied for.

BE explained that they are measures in place, including checking receipts and visiting sites/projects where necessary.

TRAKSA vote

RB proposed.

CH seconded.

Unanimous vote in favour of recommending TRAKSA's application for £1,500 towards rainwater harvesting equipment and car park resurfacing.

Cllr May returned to the room.

4. Information Note: Grants & Community Update

Becca Edwards, Community and Partnerships Officer, presented the Community Update.

In addition to the Community Update, BE noted that the Community and Partnerships Team is working on the North Herts Heroes awards which are likely to be launched in November.

5. Presentations

5.1 Cllr Amy Allen, executive Member for recycling and Waste Management at North Herts Council, gave a presentation about recycling and waste.

The portfolio includes curbside collection, highway cleansing, flytipping, some public toilets and much more.

In 2019, North Herts Council declared a Climate Emergency. The next waste contract starts in 2025, we're shaping the services that we provide to what residents need rather than want.

The services that will be changing come 2025 will be those that people need. We did a survey last year, 80% of people who responded didn't have a full bin come collection day. Less waste going into the purple bins, means less collections. Collections will be three weekly. Some people may get a bespoke service regarding bins if they have the need. Flats will remain at two weekly.

Soft plastics are being moved to being collected – maybe alongside the bin.

Confident it's going to be successful – finding that when samples of purple bins are done a lot of things could go into other bins.

It's evident that food waste is one of the biggest issues putting greenhouse gases and carbon emissions into the atmosphere. If we did more to curb food waste, it would be better than recycling every single item possible.

Herts County Council are running a [Food Worth Saving campaign](#) – focussing on looking at what you buy, use and waste. Buy less, use less, waste less.

RB invited questions.

MoP noted that three weekly collections isn't easy to remember, and asked how NHC will help residents remember.

Discussion was had around apps and calendars. It was pointed out that an app might not be the best idea for elderly residents. A printed calendar would be quite tricky as collections depend on postcodes, whether in a flat and many more things.

MoP2 explained that he had various issues regarding bins. Had requested a purple bin but was delivered a grey bin. Some large bins were removed from the flats without warning. These issues have been reported but not responded to. Doesn't find the councils reporting systems easy to use.

AA requested that MoP2 speak to her at the end of the meeting to share specific details for her to investigate.

MoP2 shared their opinion that flats have one colour bin, but houses have a different colour bin for the same type of refuse.

AA told the audience that new bins will be grey with various coloured lids that relate to the type of waste. Can't replace all bins at once due to cost and waste, but new ones are starting to come out.

MoP3 stated that they have their bins cleaned by an external company who give them a calendar and colour code it for cleaning. Might be something worth looking into.

County Councillor Fiona Hill (FH), a member of the audience, raised her concerns about three weekly collections of purple bins. If a collection is missed then it would be six weeks between collections.

AA if there's a need then the service could be made bespoke and kept at two weekly. Missed collections would need to be reported as they are at present.

MoP4 noted that they are a voluntary litter picker with Royston Environmental Group and explained that any litter he collects is placed in how general wheelie bin. Enquired if there is a record anywhere of how much litter is gathered.

AA stated that there isn't a record that she is aware of. Offered thanks to MoP4 and Royston Environmental Group. Asked if MoP4 uses the [Adopt an Area](#) scheme.

MoP4 confirmed uses Adopt an Area.

MoP5 queried what the criteria is to have garden waste collected. Noted that they have a sticker to indicate their bin needs collected. What checks are made to ensure only those who have paid is collected? Only observed someone checking on an iPad once.

AA explained that operatives have a system in their cab which indicates which households are signed up to garden waste collection. They do not need to check stickers.

MoP4 asked if AA/the Council are confident that the waste operatives are collecting as per the contract.

MoP5 added that people have stated they don't pay for garden waste collection, but it's collected anyway.

AA stated that she is confident that the contract is being followed and that it may be possible for things to slip through the net on occasion. If someone believes this to be the case, they should report to the Council.

MoP4 enquired why a property's brown bin isn't taken away if they don't sign up for collection.

AA explained that a bin is someone's personal property and for it to be taken away would be theft. However, if you have more bins than permitted these can be removed.

MoP6 shared his thoughts on how kitchen waste bins are treated. It would be useful if waste operatives didn't throw them when they have been emptied. Leads to damage.

AA stated that this has been reported to Urbaser multiple times, and damaged caddies are replaced free of charge.

MoP7 brought up an issue about confusion around addresses using the recycling centre.

FH explained that more people from Cambs had been using the Royston recycling centre than from Royston., so things changed. The operatives weren't supposed to be too strict on the addresses and this is now being addressed.

MoP7 noted that the recycling centre used to have an area where items that were still useable were left for others to take. This is no longer the case.

FH explained that there are reuse shops across the County that items are taken to. A lot of things changed after Covid due to safety reasons.

MoP8 TRAKSA is classed as commercial. Why isn't there a facility for small businesses to have recycling collected?

AA stated that this isn't something that currently happens, but a scaled down version of trade waste for small businesses could be looked into.

MoP9 enquired if blister packs can be recycled.

AA explained that if blister packs are completely aluminium, they can go in recycling. If not, then they have to go in waste. Superdrug may/may not be collecting. In supermarkets there are Terracycle collection points – shaved razors, bottle tops on hand soap etc, soft plastics and in some cases blister packs. Lots of these schemes are run by schools or charities and they raise money.

MoP7 shared that a member of Royston Environmental Group has some Teracycle on Stile Plantation. *More information can be found [here](#).*

AA noted that soft plastics will be collected in the usual recycling as of spring 2025.

RB suggested that more communication happens regarding this.

MoP2 brought the discussion back to the Royston recycling centre, noting that you cannot attend the recycling centre on foot without phoning up in advance to make an appointment.

FH explained that this is due to health and safety.

MoP2 suggested that there could be a doorbell at the entrance of the centre to contact staff.

MoP10 enquired why textiles can no longer be recycled alongside the grey bins.

AA explained that the contract for textile collections ended in July. A consultation was held and most people who responded said that they used textile banks. The take up of the service wasn't massive anyway so it wasn't reinstated. Also researched the textile banks across the district to ensure they could meet the known demand. Also, most charity shops have a rags collection, but please ensure that rags are labelled and separated from any donations to sell.

Questions were raised later in the meeting about street cleaning.

MoP11 enquired what happens if street cleaning is scheduled but cars are parked where the street cleaning would take place. The instance referred to is a road where commuters park during the day.

AA explained that cars cannot be moved so the crew would return the following day, but unfortunately if it's still not possible then there's nothing that can be done.

MoP11 noted that residents sweep the streets themselves when the commuters have left/

AA asked to speak to the MOP at the end of the meeting for specific details.

MoP enquired if street cleaning includes any kind of gardening – weeds/leaves etc. Drains specifically.

FH shared that if there is an area that has heavy leaf fall then they are focussed on, more than that is reported more knowledge they have.

AA specific drains can be reported on [Fix My Street](#).

MoP explained that he's happy to clean himself but doesn't want crews to come round and think there aren't problems.

5.2 Cllr Ruth Brown opened the Cost of Living discussion and shared information about the following:

- [Council Tax Reduction Scheme](#) – this has changed this year to help support those most in need.
- Healthy Hub

More information is available on our website: www.north-herts.gov.uk/squeeze

Cath Bennett, Community Engagement Manager at Citizens Advice North Herts (CANH), gave a presentation about services available to help with the Cost of Living.

CANH are [currently open](#): Royston Monday & Wednesday 9.30am-12noon; Letchworth Monday-Thursday 9.30am-4pm; Hitchin Tuesday 9.30am-12noon; Baldock Library, Wednesday 10.30am-12noon. Pre-booked appts preferred.

Last year, CANH helped 6,000 people across North Herts. However, due to the cost of living more people than ever are struggling. The team are trying to get out into the community and running workshops, focussing on maximising income, meal planning etc.

If a household's income is less than £40,000 they are likely to get something, so it's worth using a budget calculator to find out if you are able to apply for any benefits.

Scams are a massive issue at present, CANH are running workshops about these.

Some of the easiest things to do is to check subscriptions - that you're not on auto renew, cut out unnecessary expenditure. If you're on Direct Debit with energy suppliers, you can have the amount changed so they don't have your money. There are social tariffs for broadband.

MoP2 enquired if CANH have any information about best before food, yellow stickers etc.

CB informed the audience that they share information about things like that. There are also some good apps about, including [Too Good To Go](#) and [Olio](#).

AA noted that she runs the Wilbury Community Café once a month in Letchworth. Best before food is there for the taking, there's also second hand uniform and lots of other bits and pieces.

6. Open Discussion

Cllr Ruth Brown shared information about the [Solar Together Scheme](#).

MoP enquired what the plan for the toilets at the bus station.

RB explained that the building is likely to be leased out. There has been some interest but nothing concrete.

7. Future Area Forums

Cllr Ruth Brown explained that the meetings on January 10th and March 6th would be virtual.

Discussion was had around the virtual nature of the meetings. It was not preferred by some, but understood that as this is a trial year for the forums this is something that was being explored.

Information about future area forums will be shared on social media and posters go up around town. If you would like to be informed specifically about the area forums, please email becca.edwards@north-herts.gov.uk.

Suggested themes/topics to be discussed included:

- What the Council are doing to support the high street
- Cycle networks
- Community safety

Meeting closed 9.12pm.