

**LETCHWORTH COMMITTEE**  
**11 MARCH 2020**

**\*PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT**

**TITLE OF REPORT: GRANTS & COMMUNITY UPDATE**

REPORT OF THE POLICY & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT MANAGER

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

CURRENT COUNCIL PRIORITY: ATTRACTIVE AND THRIVING / PROSPER AND PROTECT  
/ RESPONSIVE AND EFFICIENT

NEW COUNCIL PRIORITY: BUILD THRIVING AND RESILIENT COMMUNITIES

**1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1 To advise the Committee on the current expenditure and balances of the Committee Grant budgets
- 1.2 To bring to the Committee's attention details of recent requests received for 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 Engagement officers have been involved in.
- 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 be recommended to consider allocating funding from their discretionary community budget towards the projects below.
- 2.2 **£2052** to Green Care at Norton CIC for a polytunnel and shed as outlined in 8.1.1
- 2.3 **£2000** to Letchworth Roller Hockey Club for four junior memberships as outlined in 8.1.2
- 2.4 **£2000** to 6<sup>th</sup> Platoon Letchworth Air Cadets towards equipment as outlined in 8.1.3

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| 2.5 | That the Committee be recommended to endorse the actions taken by the Community Engagement team to promote greater community capacity and well-being for Letchworth. |
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### **3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 To ensure the Committee is kept informed of the work of the Community Engagement Team.
- 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 regarding funding proposals for Committee Funds.

### **6. FORWARD PLAN**

- 6.1 This report does not contain a recommendation on a key Executive decision and has therefore 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. Letchworth Area Committee Budget Spread sheet, which relates to the Area Committee budget balances for 2019/20. The spreadsheet also details pre-allocated sums carried forward from the previous financial years, including balances and past expenditure.

8. **RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS**- it is noted that all the applicants applied for amounts over the policy figure of £1,500. Committee members are at liberty to grant a higher amount if they so wish and it is further noted that the Letchworth area committee has sufficient funds in the 2019/2020 budget which will accommodate.

8.1 **Grant Applications**

8.1.1

<b>Applicant Project</b>	<b>Green Care at Norton CIC</b> Supply and installation of a polytunnel and learning shed.
<b>Sum requested</b>	£2,052
<b>Total project cost</b>	£3,197.16
<b>Match funding</b>	£1,145
<b>Annual expenditure</b>	£unknown as only set up in July 2019
<b>Funds held</b>	£100
<b>Previous support</b>	£0
<b>NHDC Policy met</b>	Yes
<b>Current council priority:</b>	Attractive and Thriving
<b>New council priority:</b>	Build thriving and resilient communities

In July 2019 a Social and Therapeutic Horticulture project was launched, known as Green Care at Norton CIC. The aim of this project is to use allotment gardening to bring about positive changes in the lives of people living with loneliness, unemployment or who are socially excluded through mental illness, learning difficulties or social deprivation. This allotment gardening opportunity will use plants and gardens to improve physical and mental health, as well as communication and thinking skills. Participants grow their own food and learn the economic and other benefits of growing food. In addition, the allotment plot is used as a safe and secure place to develop participant's ability to mix socially, make friends and learn practical skills that will help them be more independent. This funding will go towards a polytunnel and social shed so that the project can be an all year-round activity. They want to purchase a wide tunnel in order that the project can be accessible those with physical disabilities.

### Match Funding

The group has applied to the Letchworth Civic Trust for £745 and a further £400 is anticipated via small scale events such as plant sales and a coffee morning.

The allotment space has been given free of charge for the first year by NHDC. The applicant has secured good contacts with Settle, Letchworth Heritage Foundation, the Job Centre and Create Communities and is currently working with four adults with different abilities and a further three about to start.

The applicant is requesting £2,052. Under the current grant criteria members are at liberty to award any amount they wish up to the available budget as outlined in Appendix 1.

#### 8.1.2

<b>Applicant</b>	<b>Letchworth Rink Roller Hockey Club</b>
<b>Project</b>	To offer 5 free year-long memberships to under 18's.
<b>Sum requested</b>	£2000
<b>Total project cost</b>	£2,500
<b>Match funding</b>	£500
<b>Annual expenditure</b>	£23,142
<b>Funds held</b>	£6,296 (August 2019)
<b>Previous support</b>	£0
<b>NHDC Policy met</b>	Yes
<b>Current Council priority</b>	Attractive and Thriving
<b>New Council priority</b>	Build thriving and resilient communities

The club's emphasis is on developing young players. They have 1 x Under 11 team, 2 x Under 13s, 2 x Under 15s and 2 x Under 17s. Although junior members have reduced fees, the cost of participation is high, due mainly to hall hire costs for training and tournaments. The cost of a junior membership is a little more than £500 per year (excluding kit and travel). This cost discourages new junior members, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds. Physical exercise plays an essential part in the welfare of our mental health. The club would like to offer five free places to attract new junior members. **The funding will go to the club and NOT to individual new members.**

Annual expenditure:

£23,142 (£22,200 of this goes on hall hire, club league and cup fees, a trainer and internet management)

Funds Held

£332 (August 2019) plus £5,964 in a separate fundraising account which will be used to renew equipment and kit (for example two sets of goal posts are needed and cost £3000-£3500. Subs are still at 2018 prices so subsidies to cover hire costs will be £1,500-£2,000) Other spending from this account covers safeguarding training, DBS processing and coaching.

The applicant is requesting £2,000. Under the current grant criteria members are at liberty to award any amount they wish up to the available budget as outlined in Appendix 1.

8.1.3

<b>Applicant</b>	<b>6<sup>th</sup> Platoon Letchworth Army Cadets</b>
<b>Project</b>	New Equipment
<b>Sum requested</b>	£2000
<b>Total project cost</b>	£2,768.72
<b>Match funding</b>	£600
<b>Annual expenditure</b>	£5,445.36
<b>Funds held</b>	£23.71
<b>Previous support</b>	£0
<b>NHDC Policy met</b>	Yes
<b>Current Council priority</b>	Prosper and Protect
<b>New Council priority</b>	Build thriving and resilient communities

The Army Cadet Force is a youth voluntary organisation providing young people of Letchworth between the ages of 12-18 of all abilities and backgrounds the opportunity to grow, learn new skills, have adventures and overcome challenges. The group is looking to fund damaged kit such as webbing that is needed to help improve the level of training and resources for weekend camps and to fix general wear and tear in and around the detachment. It is also planning a 4-day Battle Tour Trip around France and Belgium later this year (Aug 2020). Cadets are each doing their own personal fundraising (bag packing, car washing etc) and would like to go to Belgium to lay a wreath to remember the Letchworth Satterthwaite brothers who served in WW1. New kit will be vital towards this trip and other activities.

The Army Cadet Force is sponsored by the Army on behalf of the MOD with a set annual budget so that it can deliver a cadet training syllabus for cadets which is the same across the Air Cadets who are sponsored by the RAF and Sea Cadets who are sponsored by the Royal Navy. It's not unusual for local ACF detachments to be given grants which is then specifically used for the good and benefit of that local ACF detachment and therefore seen to be serving that local youth community. Whilst there is a central bank account, there are individual detachment funding columns and any donated money will go directly to the named Detachment and invoices can be shown as evidence.

The applicant is requesting £2,000. Under the current grant criteria members are at liberty to award any amount they wish up to the available budget as outlined in Appendix 1.

## **8.2 Community Engagement and update on Previous Grants awarded**

### **8.2.1 Policy and Community Engagement Team**

The team have been continuing to engage and network with local community groups and initiatives. This involved:

- Working with the North Herts Pickleball Club to make an application for funds to resurface a public court on Norton Common. This involved extensive liaison between the club, Service Manager and Area Monitoring Officer for Green Spaces, Councillors and the Area Manager from DOE Sport (specialists in the construction of synthetic sports pitches). Further to advice from Green Spaces and the Area Monitoring Officer, the decision has been made that re-surfacing the court is not a viable option and in fact the coating could be detrimental to the surface. However, it has been agreed that under recommendation the court surface will be power washed twice a year to allow safe play to continue.
- Continued work to engage young people to form a North Herts Youth Council liaising with YC Herts and local Councillors.
- Attended meetings with members of the Housing and Homelessness Team and Green Spaces to share what the role of the Community Engagement Team is and how we can best work together.
- Planning a district-wide environmental awareness event for April called Waste Not Want Less.
- The setting up of a new network group for all those involved in community projects working in gardens and allotments.
- Attended a new group called Edi-Cit-Net. Letchworth is part of the Edible Cities Network (EdiCitNet), which is a five-year EU-funded research-based international project working with a consortium of partners including universities, NGO, cities, and institutional bodies.

- Working with a young businesswoman who is keen to support small local and independent businesses in Letchworth Town Centre. I will attend the next network meeting with Letchworth Heritage Foundation, the Local Enterprise Partnership and Small and Medium Enterprises.
- Forged links with Community Development Officers from Stevenage Borough Council

#### 8.2.2 Community Christmas Café

The Café was a great success and was extended from three Saturdays to four. It was a great opportunity to be able to support so many families and those in need. There was some wonderful conversation with individuals, as well as educating people to take and use the food on offer to save it going into landfill.

Any left-over food was handed out to passers-by. Volunteers supported by baking and covering shifts. Thanks also go to the Heritage Foundation, Citizens Advice and Herts Young Homeless, the Need Project and Best Before Café.

The donations box collected £328 which was divided between the Need Project and the Salvation Army.





### Project 15 Art Installation

The month-long exhibition held in a shop unit on Leys Avenue went very well. A total of eight different local artists were able to exhibit in three different exhibitions over the whole month.

Approximately 400 visitors over the course of the month dropped in. Artists received feedback from visitors saying how this was a brilliant opportunity to engage with artists on a personal level who could then explain the concepts behind their work.

### KIP Education

The project delivered a very successful session to students of Fearnhill School on drugs and alcohol in the Autumn term and are scheduled to do the same in April to parents and students at Hitchin Boys School. KIP has also arranged to host a county-wide conference in May to address the issues of youth violence, County Lines and young people's mental health.

### Resolve

All the grant, along with the other funding secured for the move was spent on the refurbishment of the Letchworth site.

Since moving to Letchworth, Resolve has a threefold increase in client numbers with 17 new referrals since 1st January 2020 alone.

Referrals are now coming from Settle who now provide a bi-weekly surgery for housing needs at Letchworth. Community Mental Health, Childrens' Services and Job Centre Plus also provide a regular surgery at the site and we are seeing increasing numbers of people being referred from the statutory drug and alcohol treatment services CGL and The Living Room.



Recently, we have seen two people “walk in”, which means people locally are also becoming aware that Resolve is in the locality. This is clearly a great thing for the awareness of the service for residents.

The second phase of the refit is almost finished, so visitors are welcome if any of the Councillors or officers would like to drop in. Thursdays are best; contact Trish, Senior project Manager details online <https://resolve-online.org/north-herts-service/>



### Imajica Theatre Company

The Christmas panto was a great success. 540 people attended with 70% of those having additional needs so funding was much appreciated.



### **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.
- 8.3.2 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 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 2019/20.
- 10.2 The agreed budget for this financial year is £11,000 in line with the 20% reduction in grant budgets as agreed by full council. The carry over amount from 2018/19 was £17,732 which has been fully allocated with £15,932 spent in 2019/20 and £1800 allocated for spend in 2020/21.
- 10.3 Thus far Letchworth committee has allocated and spent £920 from the 2019/20 budget leaving £10,080 to utilise for this meeting – the last of this financial year.
- 10.4 The grant funding applied for in this round adds up to **£6,052**. The committee has sufficient funds to award the full amount to all organisations as outlined on the report. If all the grants considered at this meeting are agreed it will leave a carry-over amount of £4,028.

## **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" requirements 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 - 2019/20 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.
- 17.2 Review of Grant Policy Cabinet June 2016.