

**LETCHWORTH COMMITTEE
6 DECEMBER 2017**

***PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT**

AGENDA ITEM No.

6

TITLE OF REPORT: GRANTS AND 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, which conform to the Authority's Grants Policy approved by Cabinet on June 14th 2016.
- 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 endorses the actions taken by the Community Officer to promote greater community capacity and well-being for Letchworth.
- 2.2 That the Committee be recommended to consider the provision of grant funding to the organisations outlined below:-
 - 2.2.1 Groundwork Hertfordshire £2,968 to deliver informal sessions for families to engage with the natural environment on Norton Common as outlined in 8.1.1
 - 2.2.2 Kings Community Church £450 towards the cost of Gazebo style marquee for their school holiday schemes, as outlined in 8.1.2
 - 2.2.3 Letchworth Parkrun £500 towards start up costs to run free 5k weekly community running sessions on Grange Recreation Ground, as outlined in 8.1.3
- 2.3 That the Committee be recommended that £1000 grant funding previously allocated to the Impact Youth Group be reallocated to Youth Engagement, as outlined in 8.1.4

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 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 2017/18.
- 7.2 The spreadsheet also details pre-allocated sums carried forward from the previous financial years, including balances and past expenditure relating to the allocated and unallocated Area Capital Visioning Budgets available to the Committee.

8. RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS

8.1 Grant Applications

8.1.1 Groundwork Hertfordshire

Groundwork is applying for £2,968 to deliver informal sessions on Norton Common for parents and their children aged 0-8. The supervised outdoor play sessions will help parents to gain the skills and confidence needed to use local green spaces for exercise and fun. It will help families to discover a local green space, explore its wildness, help to conserve it and share their experiences and learning with other people. The project will take place between January and March 2018 delivery will be 12 x 1.5 hour sessions, delivered over 6 weeks.

Despite evidence that being active outdoors and engaging with nature can provide substantial benefits for physical and mental health, unfortunately there is also some evidence that children are playing outdoors less than in previous generations (e.g. National Trust's Natural Childhood report 2012) and are therefore not developing the active play habits that lay the foundations for becoming active adults

This project will develop local families' capacity to provide their young children with a stimulating, enjoyable and free play actively in their local green spaces. It will also work towards tackling inactivity by getting families outdoors and being active.

They will be working with groups of families and with the networks and services that support them to develop the skills they need to promote active children's play habits. Groundwork has run similar programmes for groups of families for example in Borehamwood (Hertfordshire), Bedford and Fenland in Cambridgeshire and their project evaluation demonstrates that parents become more confident, children more active and outgoing, and that connections made between families continue outside of Groundwork-led activity.

Families who play together outside will be healthier and more resilient through increased physical activity and improved communication. Training provided to professionals and volunteers will ensure that skills are passed onto new families in future. Increased use of parks and green spaces by families will make neighbourhoods feel safer and more vibrant.

8.1.2 Kings Community Church

The Kings Community Church based on Whiteways and has been on the Jackmans Estate for the past 12 years. During this time they have been running events such as the annual holiday club which is provided free for children aged 5-11, Community BBQ's, light parties, NEED project and many other regular / annual events. All of these events are open to both church and non- members without discrimination.

The main church building only consists of two halls so when larger events are held, they have enough external space to be able to erect a marquee which has in the past acted as an additional safe and dry space to use for outside/inside activities.

However, due to extreme winds the last time the marquee was used over the summer the marquee sustained irreparable damage and needs replacing to enable the outdoor space to be used for events next year.

The cost of the gazebo style 9 x 4 meter marquee including weights is £600 and the Church has raised £150 towards this cost.

They are requesting £450 grant funding towards the purchase the equipment.

8.1.3 Letchworth Parkrun

Letchworth Parkrun is a free, weekly, timed 5km run, which aims to encourage activity and participation in running and sport in general, whether people walk, jog or run. The Weekly events will take place on The Grange Recreational Ground, with permission from both North Hertfordshire District Council and the Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation.

Parkrun organise free, weekly, 5km timed runs around the world. They are open to everyone, free, and are safe and easy to take part in.

These events take place in pleasant parkland surroundings and all abilities are encouraged to take part; from those taking their first steps in running to Olympians; from juniors to those with more experience; all are welcome.

Parkrun also requires a core group of volunteers and encourages people to gain confidence, learn new skills and meet new people. Over time the organisers will look to work with community groups who don't traditionally engage in activities and also work with charity and community partners. £500 funding is requested towards purchasing the equipment needed to start the Letchworth Parkrun which is due to commence in January 2018.

The total cost of the equipment equates to £1000 but the organisers have secured £500 from the Community Sport Fund.

8.1.4 Previous Grants Awarded

Impact Youth Club: was awarded £1000 at the March meeting this year. Since that time the group have not been able to set up suitable governance or formal management committee or a bank account. Having liaised with those individuals who had hoped to initiate youth activity for their local area, it has been agreed that they would be best suited to acting as volunteers with out a managerial responsibility. Therefore they will hopefully be involved with the Youth Engagement Project as outlined below in 8.2.2.

If members are minded the £1000 allocated to this group could be reallocated to the Youth Engagement projects in order to attract external funding sources.

8.2 **Update on Community Engagement**

8.2.1 Jackman's Community Centre

The Jackman's Community Centre have successfully applied for the Community Facilities Capital Grant and received funding towards the cost of installing new disabled toilet facilities utilising a former cleaning cupboard. They are also renovating the existing ladies and gents facilities to the same standard in order to provide high standard of quality to enhance services to future hirers.

8.2.2 Youth Engagement Project

Following regular networking meetings with agencies providing services targeting children and young people, it has been identified that there appears to be a lack of social activities aimed at this group in Letchworth.

The Communities team have engaged a Communities Officer on a part time temporary basis to engage with both partner agencies and young people in town in order to identify this need. We will be looking to develop the youth offer to the area of Letchworth. Working with key partners from the Letchworth Youth Action Group new youth opportunities will be identified across the town.

Officers will be identifying possible social enterprise ventures with young people at the heart of the business. The project is currently in phase 1; engaging young people to ascertain what they would like to do. In partnership it is aimed to support them in forming a constituted group from which they can secure external investment.

In the longer term the desire is to make the project centrally based in the Town Centre. Outreach work will be taking place in the outlying areas such as the Grange, Wilbury and Jackmans. During the outreach consultation stage we will be supported by staff from HCC YC Herts. Additionally we are looking to re-install the active youth voice from Letchworth so that their views can be heard at decision making level within the Council.

8.2.3 Cycle Rack Project

As mentioned in the Grant and Community Update report for the meeting held on July 5th 2017 (8.3.1)

The arrangements for the installation of cycle racks and cycle pods to schools and community facilities in Letchworth have been finalised and the project will commence during December. The project has been funded using S106 money designated to sustainable transport. It is hoped that the project will encourage the use of cycling as a means of transport for local journeys and reduce traffic and parking issues in the town.

8.3 **Highways Matters**

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 Section 9.8.2 (g) of 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". 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.
- 9.2 Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 provides a General Power of Competence which gives local authorities the powers to do anything:-
- An individual may generally do
 - Anywhere in the UK or elsewhere
 - For a commercial purpose or otherwise, for a charge or without a charge
 - Without the need to demonstrate that it will benefit the authority, its area or person's resident or present in its area.
- 9.3 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.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 The budget for the 2016/17 financial year was £19,500. An amount of £6,877 was carried forward for use in the current financial year, so far £5,648 has been allocated from the carry forward leaving an amount of £1,229.

As outlined in Appendix 1; the discretionary grant budget for this year is £19,500 therefore providing a total of £20,729 available to provide grant funding to eligible groups and organisations.

Any grant funding allocated at this meeting will be spent from the £1,229 2016/17 carry forward in the first instance.

11. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 There are no relevant risk entries that have been recorded on Pentana Performance, 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 - 2017/18 financial year budget sheet

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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