**VIRTUAL MEETING OF MEMBERS OF LETCHWORTH COMMITTEE**
**16 JUNE 2021**

***PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT**

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

**REPORT OF THE POLICY & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT MANAGER**

**EXECUTIVE MEMBER:** COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

**CURRENT COUNCIL PRIORITIES:** BUILD THRIVING AND RESILIENT COMMUNITIES

## 1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 To advise the Members on the current expenditure and balances of the Committee Grant budgets.

1.2 To bring to the Members' attention recent requests received for Committee grant funding, made by community groups and local organisations.

1.3 To advise of the activities and schemes with which the Community Engagement officers have been involved in.

1.4 To bring to the Members' attention some important community-based activities that will take place during the next few months.

## 2 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 That the members recommend to the Executive Member for Community Engagement, (in consultation with the Service Director Legal and Community) to allocate the following funding from the discretionary community budget:

**£2,940** to Make Lunch Letchworth for food and educational activities during school holidays for families in receipt of free school meals as outlined in 8.1.1.

## 3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 To ensure the Members are kept informed of the work of the Community Engagement Team.

3.2 This report is intended to inform Members of the financial resources available. It draws attention to the current budgetary situation by assisting in the effective financial management of budgets. 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 January 2020.

3.3 Following the cessation of the Flexibility of Meeting Regulations 2020 Committees are required to physically meet should they wish to legally participate and make decisions. As this meeting is being held on a virtual platform, with no Chair or Vice Chair having been appointed at the Annual Council Meeting, no decisions can be made and any decisions on whether to award financial assistance to voluntary organisations and the use of discretionary spending needs to be via a recommendation to the Executive Member for Community Engagement in consultation with the Service Director, Legal and Community.

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 Council Plan.

## 4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

4.1. Delay decisions until the Committee meets in person, which is not considered the best option as many community organisations rely on such Grants.

4.2. Or, to consider the options proposed as detailed within the text of this report, to assist the Executive Member for Community Engagement in understanding the express wishes of the Members. In the course of the debate, 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.

5.3 As this meeting has no decision making powers, the members are being consulted on its views as to whether to award funding to the project as outlined in paragraph 8.1.1 and to subsequently recommend to the Executive Member for Community Engagement.

## 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.

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 2021/22. The spreadsheet also details pre-allocated sums carried forward from the previous financial years, including balances and past expenditure.

**8. RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS-** Councillors are at liberty to consider any amount requested in a grant application as long as the Letchworth area committee has sufficient funds in the 2021/2022 budget.

8.1 **Grant Applications**

8.1.1

| | |
|---|---|
| **Applicant** | **Make Lunch Letchworth** |
| **Project** | For food and educational activities during school holidays for families in receipt of free school meals |
| **Sum requested** | £2,940 |
| **Total project cost** | £6,240 |
| **Joint funding** | £2,800 personal contributions<br>£500 from Letchworth Civic Trust |
| **NHDC Policy met** | YES |
| **Council Priorities** | Build thriving and resilient communities |

Make Lunch Letchworth are an organisation run by volunteers from local Churches to help feed, support, and provide for families that find themselves struggling in school holidays. Pre-COVID, families could come along and enjoy a cooked, healthy meal and social interaction. During the lockdown episodes, they adapted to take recipe boxes to families' doors in a COVID-safe way and provided YouTube videos on how to make the meals at home. Those recipe boxes also included fantastic activities for the children and face masks. The Make Lunch idea is a national project run by Transforming Lives for Good, a registered Charity themselves (see https://www.tlg.org.uk/your-church/make-lunch), who give access to resources but do not financially support each local Make Lunch group. Each Make Lunch group must provide their own funding. In this case the funding will be held by the New Life Church.

The funding will be used towards the cost of Food and educational activities for the 32 families they currently have on their system. They provide balanced meal suggestions which are taught via YouTube videos if they are unable to meet face-to-face; and they have experienced education professionals devising and overseeing activities and provisions. Make Lunch Letchworth help families in Letchworth who struggle to feed their children in a healthy way through the school holidays. They are also educating families by providing a range of stimulating activities for children and young people when school is out. The value exists in fulfilling demand from families during school holidays
Currently working with 32 families although this number could increase, this equates to 128 people.

When the lunch club is operational it is based at the hall at St. Paul's Church Letchworth. The recipe boxes delivered during lockdown have been put together at different Church venues in Letchworth. AS outlined above they provide food and activities during School holiday periods. Currently this is once-a-week during school holiday periods.

The group receive details of potential families through local Schools. They have a good relationship with the Best Before Café and work in partnership with other members of the NHDC Food Provision Network group. They also have strong links with local Supermarkets who donate food items.
The cost of providing food and activities is between £320 and £480 per week of a school holiday for the 32 families, this equates to Up to £6,240 for 13-weeks of School holiday periods in one academic year.
The group have raised £2,800 from contributions and the Letchworth Civic Trust have provided £500 in March. So far Make Lunch Letchworth have £3,300 leaving £2,940 funding required.

They have approached the Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation (LGCHF) for a contribution of £2,000 to the project. However, the next grant meeting of the LGCHF isn't until July 28th which is after the Summer School holidays have started.

If the Committee wish to support this application, then they could agree to provide £940.00 for the group to commence activities for the Summer Holidays.

**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:

- Facilitating network meetings to ensure community groups are kept in touch.
- Continuing to share and disseminate information on social media and to mailing lists, keeping in touch with the community, voluntary, statutory and non-statutory agencies.
- Investigating the possibility of conducting face to face councillor surgeries again in line with Covid 19 health and safety concerns and current government guidelines.
- Attending meetings of the North Herts Youth Strategy Group, North Herts Families First and the Family Support Service Partnership.

- Liaising with a new Romanian Association to link them in with other groups and assist them to create a robust organisational structure to enable them to apply for funding.

- Liaising with Garden City Church community pastor - new community café and school uniform bank

- Liaising with Icknield way Gurdwara in Irvin House regarding capital grant to create more usable community space for wider community.

- Linking the Garden City Church and the Gurdwara together so that their work to include the wider community is complementary.

- Liaising with Letchworth Corner Sports club regarding a Community Facility Capital Grant

8.2.2 **Update on Previous Grants Awarded**

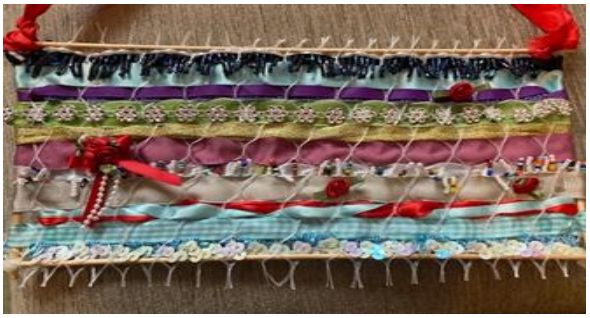
- Open Art Box – update from Christina Armstrong

  We are halfway through our 10-week project and have been able to increase our deliveries to 16 participants in Letchworth as well 4 in other areas of North Herts. This funding has come at a crucial transition period, when people have not quite been able to get back to groups and are feeling really fatigued after a long winter. It has both allowed us to give continued support for our long running participants, as well as reach new people living with dementia in the Letchworth community.
  For this project we have been focussing on art to enliven the senses and connect with nature. There have been opportunities to explore more unusual art techniques such as Cyanotype photography, printmaking, weaving, embossing and sound art.

  Each week we collect feedback from participants. One lady Pauline said to me when I delivered her box yesterday "these projects help to make my life interesting, giving me new challenges that are just wonderful and unexpected".

  When this project finishes in June, we have arranged a fortnightly art club at Mrs Howard Memorial Hall, that will allow us to continue our support for our Letchworth participants, giving them a well overdue chance to finally get together to create art. Speaking to Bobby there today, he has also offered for us the use of their main hall to have an exhibition of the work that has been made during this time!

  We are so grateful for NHDC support in helping us to continue to support our participants at such a crucial time. Thank you.









- <u>Family Learning Allotment</u>

  Continue to work with the two families who have been with the project since it started. Now the schools are back, the group are liaising with Garden City Academy and will be taking part in an Assembly to promote the allotment after half term. They have so far bought 2 tonnes of soil/compost from Cumberlows, costing £96 and they managed to negotiate a discount from the usual price of £102. Other purchases will occur as the need arises.









- Wilbury and Ickneild School Parents Association WISPA – portacabin at Wilbury School
  This project is still on hold, I understand further funding towards the project has been agreed by the Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation. It is hoped that the school will also be able to contribute but they have several projects happening around the site and the amount available for this project will depend on what surplus is left from other initiatives. The school still waiting to hear from Hertfordshire County Council as to whether they have permission to site the portacabin (or similar structure) on the school land. Under the current grant criteria organisations have a period of up to one year from the date of the decision to spend the funding. If there has been no further development by March 2022 the group will be requested to report back to the Letchworth Committee. However, if it is clear the project will not take place the offer of funding will be withdrawn, and the funds reallocated to the budget.

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 Usually the Chair and Vice Chair of the various Area Committees would have been elected following the Annual Council meeting. However, due to the pandemic and issues regarding the maximum number of people that could be accommodated within the Council Chamber the appointments did not take place.

9.2 Until the Area Committees have convened 'in person' and the respective Chairs and Vice Chairs elected they are not able to be consulted for the purposes of delegated decisions for grant aid/financial support.

9.3 Therefore an amendment has been made to 9.8.2 and 14.6.8 (b) (iii) of the Constitution on 1 June 2021[1], to enable the Executive Member for Community Engagement to continue to make delegated decisions – '*The Executive Member for Community Engagement, having consulted the Chair or Vice Chair of the relevant Area Committee, or where no Chair or Vice Chair – the Members of the Area Committee by majority or those responding, or confirming via virtual means, and Service Director: Legal and Community; of on recommendation of Grants Panel'.*

9.4 Sections 9.8.1 (a) and 9.8.1 (b) of the Council's Constitution in respect of the Area Committees' Terms of Reference, notes the following:- To allocate discretionary budgets within the terms determined by the Council and to allocate devolved budgets and activities within the terms determined by the Council. This is outlined in the current Grant

[1] Delegated Decision to amend the Constitution 1 June 2021

Policy agreed by Cabinet in January 2020. Section 9.8.2 (h) of the Constitution in respect of Area Committees' Terms of Reference notes 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.
However, if the Members of the Committee meets on a virtual or partly virtual platform, such decisions cannot be made and instead the Members must make a recommendation, as per 9.3 above, to the Executive Member for Community Engagement, in consultation with the Service Director Legal and Community to allocate the funding from the respective budget.

## 10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 As outlined in Appendix 1 - 2021/22 Financial Year Budget Sheet

10.2 The carry over amount from 2020/21 was £4,800. there is an amount of £2,000 allocated (but not spent) to the Wilbury and Ickneild School Parents Association (WISPA). This can be released once they have the relevant permissions to site the portacabin the funding is sought towards. This leaves an unallocated carry over of £2,800

The budget for 2021/22 is £11,000 therefore the total funds available to allocate this financial year is £13,800

10.3 The grant funding application for this meeting totals **£2,940**. The budget has sufficient funds to award the full amount to the organisation as outlined at 8.1.
If the Members agree to recommend the award of this sum to the Executive Member for Community Engagement, this will leave a balance of £10,860

## 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. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

14.1 The grant application for a portacabin at Wilbury Junior School has the potential to create positive environmental implications as the intention is to facilitate increased levels of recycling.

## 15. HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

15.1 There are no pertinent Human Resource implications associated with any items within this report

## 16. APPENDICES

16.1 Appendix 1 - 2021/22 Financial Year Budget Sheet

## 17. CONTACT OFFICERS

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## 18. BACKGROUND PAPERS

18.1 Review of Policies and Procedures for Financial Assistance to Voluntary and Community Organisations, November 2002.

18.2 Review of Grant Policy Cabinet January 2020