

***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.

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 Committee considers allocating funding from their discretionary community budget towards the projects below:
- 2.2 **£2,500** to Imajica Theatre Company CIC requesting funding for a community pantomime programme taking place in December 2021 that will provide both affordable and complementary access to the performing arts for a family friendly audience in the community as outlined in 8.1.1
- 2.3 **£1,950** to Nova Wellness CIC to cover the cost of wellness therapy events for Letchworth residents who are referred to us by partner voluntary North Herts organisations based in Letchworth as outlined in 8.1.2

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 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.

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.

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 Project	IMAJICA THEATRE COMPANY CIC requesting funding for a community pantomime programme taking place in December 2021
Sum requested	£2,500
Total project cost	£5,950
Joint funding	£3,450 Expected income from Crowdfunding, sponsorship, selling advertising in the programme and ticket sales.
NHDC Policy met	YES
Council Priorities	Build thriving and resilient communities

Imajica Theatre are asking for funding towards a community pantomime programme taking place in December 2021 that will provide both affordable and complementary access to the performing arts for a family audience in the community.

They will put on a 1.5 days of professional high-quality Christmas musical performances in a local theatre for the younger audience that is affordable and inclusive. They welcome those with additional social and educational needs to all their performances. Their tickets are also priced to be affordable to those on low incomes.

Imajica Theatre also have an alternative option of a digital pantomime in case COVID-19 strict restrictions are brought back into place which will then be released to those who had booked tickets and offered to community groups to send out to their data base. These broadcasts will target:

- families with children and those with young adults living in North Hertfordshire.
- Children and young people with additional social and educational needs and families living on lower wages

550 people directly benefit from attending the production in the live capacity and in that figure over 350 residents from North Hertfordshire will benefit from complementary tickets.

For the digital version, they intend for the outreach to be larger, with 50 views from paying customers and providing free access to all primary schools and local community groups that support families. (approx.100 views) A view would be one school of approx. 300 children or a community group with between 25-100 attendees

The event will take place in December, they are in the process of confirming the Live performance date with St Chris School Theatre, it is expected to take place on 10th – 12th December. The digital production option if taken would be filmed in Late November ready to go live in at the beginning of December

They will create and distribute flyers to advertise the event and by visiting schools in the area and delivering promotional performances in assemblies to encourage families to

come to the performances. They will also target their current audience base and build on this with new customers.

In order to promote the pantomime, they will put up posters locally, they have 2 roll banners for taking to events and 2 outdoor banners to be placed around North Hertfordshire in the lead up to the event.

They will create a high profile on their social media sites and actively seek to request that their client base promote the event and share with their contacts.

Imajica will be working with local charities and community groups to invite families who meet the requirements for complementary tickets to apply for them and they intend to run competitions via the Letchworth BID and their social media platforms.

8.1.2

Applicant Project	Nova Wellness CIC Wellness therapy events for Letchworth residents who are referred to us by partner voluntary North Herts organisations based in Letchworth.
Sum requested	£1,950
Total project cost	£1,950
Joint funding	None
NHDC Policy met	YES
Council Priorities	Build thriving and resilient communities

Nova Wellness CIC are requesting funding to cover the cost of therapy events for Letchworth residents who are referred to them by partner voluntary North Herts organisations based in Letchworth.

This could be individual therapies or as part of a group session. The therapies may help clients overcome their anxieties and fears, get them out into the community again, help rebuild their confidence, increase their mobility, and help with their general well-being.

Therapies will include: - well-being acupuncture, reiki healing, reflexology, holistic back massage, facial relaxing massage and Indian head massage.

Booking times and dates will be flexible to suit the needs of the clients, as this will be the most cost-effective use of any funding secured. Nova clinic will be offering the same Wellness event to both 'funded' clients and 'private' clients. This will ensure higher attendance rates and provide a more sociable atmosphere for all.

The funding will pay for up to 60 individual therapy sessions but significantly more if therapies are offered in a group setting. The partnering North Herts organisations will be able to choose which setting (individual or group) would be more suitable for their clients, depending on whether social interaction would be an additional benefit to the client.

Nova Wellness will be working with Letchworth voluntary organisations and charities and accept direct referrals to ensure that therapies are provided to those that need them the

most, including their clients, volunteers, and staff members. However, the events will be open to all. In the past year North Herts residents received close to 15% of all well-being therapies provided at Nova Clinic.

Nova Wellness have established links with North Herts CVS and will involve, amongst others, the following groups in their referral network: Growing People, Wilbury Community Forum and Diversity + Culture Group.

They are particularly keen to work with those affected by the Covid 19 pandemic both mentally and physically, including teenagers, young adults, their parents as well as the elderly:

Over 60-s: many have been isolated due to shielding, often have not seen their friends or family for several months, and this has impacted on their mental well-being.

Teenagers and young adults, following the covid 19 pandemic, the mental effects of the pandemic on teenagers and young adults have increased. Taken out from their normal school/work routines and environments, unable to socialise in the normal way, fearful of what has been happening around them and what's awaiting them – many seem to have been pushed to their limit: suffering debilitating anxiety and other issues. Their parents are reporting being completely at a loss with how to deal with how their children have been affected during this pandemic.

Parents of teenagers and young adults: This has had a huge impact on the mental health of both parents and primary carers. Relations between parents and children have become extremely strained due to being constantly together.

Depending upon whether they have individual or group sessions which will enable us to reach more people. Approximately 30 people receiving on average 2 individual therapy sessions each or a much higher number in a group setting.

The sessions will take place on 1st & 3rd Wednesday of each month At Nova Clinic, North Road, Stevenage SG1 4BB

Partnering organisations and their clients will be able to select the day and time that suits them.

They will communicate with Letchworth community and voluntary organisations and charities and let them know about the event and funding. They will provide the therapies to clients referred by the organisations, as well as their volunteers and staff members.

The events and funding will also be communicated via relevant local Facebook groups

8.2 Community Engagement Update

8.2.1 Community Engagement Team

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

- The Baldock CEO has been working with Letchworth RBL, Letchworth Heritage, Letchworth BID and the Police with plans for this year's Remembrance Service. It is envisaged that the event will include a parade and ceremony at the War Memorial by Letchworth Train Station. However, due to Policing resources this may not be possible. All Police Forces across Hertfordshire are on standby to assist with the Annual International Conference to discuss global action on

Climate Change event in Glasgow in November. The Baldock CEO (who has a specialism in events and road traffic management) is in discussions with the Royal British Legion Head Office regarding an alternative location for the event in Letchworth. The Baldock CEO will be assisting with any TCPA Road Closure Applications required for the event, the event Risk Assessment and will provide marshal support on the day.

- Supporting various local and district wide Network Groups such as Youth Action, Food Provision and the newly formed Arts and Culture Network.
- Continuing to work with, and add to, the Arts Cooperative which was set up after the Hitchin Arts and Culture Town Talk
- Assisting in Charnwood House (former Hitchin Museum) Open Days.
- 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.
- Gathering speakers and information for the Cabinet Panel for Community Engagement and Co-operative Development.
- Assisting in the organisation of the Chair's Volunteer Awards and next year's Holocaust Memorial Day Event.
- Working with groups to help them secure funding from the new Health Protection Board Covid Fund.

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 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 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.

- 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 2021/22
- 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.
- 10.3 The allocation of £940 agreed at the last meeting in June 2021 to Make Lunch Letchworth has utilised the 2020/21 carry over leaving £1,860
The budget for 2021/22 is £11,000 when you include the £1,860 carry over, the total funds available to allocate this financial year is £12,860.
- 10.4 The grant funding application for this meeting totals **£4,450**. The budget has sufficient funds to award the full amount to the organisation as outlined at 8.1.
If the Members agree to provide funding as requested this will leave a balance of **£8,410**

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 There are no known Environmental impacts or requirements that apply to this report.

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

17.1 Author: Claire Morgan, Community Engagement Team Leader
Email: Claire.morgan@north-herts.gov.uk ext. 4226

Contributors: Reuben Ayavoo, Policy & Community Engagement Manager
Email: reuben.ayavoo@north-herts.gov.uk ext. 4212

Anne Miller, Assistant Accountant
Email: Anne.Miller@north-herts.gov.uk ext. 4374

Yvette Roberts, Legal Officer
Email: Yvette.roberts@north-herts.gov.uk ext. 4310

Laura Bignell, Acting Human Resources Operations Manager
Email: Laura.Bignell@north-herts.gov.uk ext. 4347

Tim Everitt, Performance & Risk Officer
Email: tim.everitt@north-herts.gov.uk ext. 4646

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