

**CABINET SUB-COMMITTEE (COUNCIL CHARITIES)  
XX DECEMBER 2021**

**\*PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT**

**TITLE OF REPORT: ANNUAL REPORTS AND ACCOUNTS FOR COUNCIL  
ADMINISTERED CHARITIES**

REPORT OF: Service Director: Resources

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: *N/a*

COUNCIL PRIORITY: BE A MORE WELCOMING, INCLUSIVE AND EFFICIENT COUNCIL

**1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This report includes the returns required for each of the Charities/Charitable Trusts administered by the Council. The four Charities/ Charitable Trusts are; Hitchin Town Hall Gymnasium and Workmans Hall Trust, King George's Field Hitchin, Smithson Recreation Ground and Hertfordshire Yeomanry and Artillery Collection. The Charities Sub-Committee approve the accounts and annual reports prior to submission to the Charities Commission, if a return is required.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1. That the Charities Sub-Committee approves the information required by the Charities Commission for the four registered charities, so that the returns can be submitted prior to the 31st January 2022 deadline.
- 2.2. That the Charities Sub-Committee notes the requirement for those charities with gross income of more than £25k in their financial year to have their accounts independently examined and, as this applies to King George's Field and Hitchin Town Hall Gymnasium and Workmans Hall, instructs this to be undertaken for those accounts for 2020/21. This will be undertaken by the Shared Internal Audit Service (SIAS).

**3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

To facilitate the submission of approved returns to the Charities Commission.

**4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 4.1 None. There is a need to comply with the Charities Commission requirements.

**5. CONSULTATION WITH RELEVANT MEMBERS AND EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS**

- 5.1. None applicable.

**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 The Charities commission recommend that “the management of a charity should be kept separate, as far as possible, from the business of the local authority. Depending on the size and circumstances of the charity, it may make sense for a committee of councillors to be allocated to this task. Equally the finances of the trust must be kept separate from those of the Council”.

7.2 This Sub-Committee was established to discharge this duty on behalf of the Council.

7.3 The information provided below is produced by nominated Officers with support from the finance team. Once approved by this Committee, the returns will be submitted by the nominated Officers. For those charities with income under £25k, the Charities Commission only require the submission of summary financial information. For charities with income above £25k, the Charities Commission require the following:

- The preparation of accounts which have been subjected to an independent examination.
- Provide a copy of an annual report
- Answer a set of questions in relation to the charity

7.4 There are further requirements in respect of charities that have an income above £1million and/or assets in excess of £3.26million. These limits are not relevant to any of the Council charities.

## **8. RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS**

8.1 The following Council Charities are registered with the Charities Commission (with registration number in brackets):

### **Hitchin Town Hall Gymnasium and Workman’s Hall Trust (CC Number 233752)**

8.2 The financial statements for this Trust are included in Appendix 1a and the Service Director: Customers produces the annual report, as included in Appendix 1b. Responses to the questions that the Charities Commission requires answers to are attached at Appendix 1c.

8.3 In line with Government regulations in response to Covid-19 the museum was closed for a significant proportion of 2020/21. In the periods where it was open, health protection measures have been put in place to help protect staff and visitors.

8.4 Apart from the North Herts Council contribution towards building running costs, the most significant income source to this Trust is grants and donations. But due to the long periods of closure in 2020/21, these were significantly lower than in 2019/20 (£6.7k compared with £22.6k). The costs incurred were also affected by Covid-19, with lower spend on exhibitions and events, and on equipment. There is still a need to heat and cool the building to preserve the exhibits even when it is closed, so utilities costs are actually higher than in the previous year.

- 8.5 The total income figure exceeds £25k so an independent review by the Shared Internal Audit Service (SIAS) has been requested.

**King George's Field Hitchin (CC Number 1087603)**

- 8.6 The financial statements for this Trust are included in Appendix 2a and the Service Manager for Greenspace produces the annual report, as included in Appendix 2b. Responses to the questions that the Charities Commission requires answers to are attached at Appendix 2c.
- 8.7 The most significant income source to this Trust was the NHC contribution of £63k, which largely funded the ongoing maintenance and administrative costs to NHC arising from these playing fields. As the income figure exceeds £25k an independent review by the Shared Internal Audit Service (SIAS) has been requested

**Smithson Recreation Ground (CC Number 264311)**

- 8.8 The day to day management of the grounds lies with NHC. The costs of maintaining this land on behalf of the Trust are included in Appendix 3a. As the expenditure (and therefore the income contribution provided by NHC) is less than £25k, the Charity Commission do not require full accounts to be produced. Nor do they require an annual return to be submitted.

**Hertfordshire Yeomanry and Artillery Collection (CC Number 1100515)**

- 8.9 This is the only charity that does not involve land or buildings. It is a collection of military artefacts bequeathed to the Council by way of a Trust Deed dated 6 August 2003. 8.10 This collection is managed by the Cultural Services Manager. As the funds are less than £10k (and there is no land or buildings) then all that the Charities Commission requires is a confirmation that nothing has changed with regard to the Collection in the past financial year. The responsible Council officer, the Cultural Services Manager, has confirmed this is the case and that there have been no significant activities or achievements for the charity and nor have there been any decisions taken that required consideration of the public benefit test. Therefore there is no specific return for the sub-committee to approve, and consequently no Appendix.

**9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1. The Council acts as the Trustee for the above mentioned Charities/ Charitable Trusts and this Sub-Committee of the Cabinet is the managing committee appointed on behalf of the Council to manage them. Members when carrying out their duties on the managing committee must act solely in interests of the charity. They do not promote the interests of a 3rd party (i.e. the Council), even if that 3rd party appointed them to the managing committee.
- 9.2. The Sub-Committee's role and function under 5.10.4 (a) (b) and (e) of the constitution is to act on behalf of the Council as a Trustee for all assets of the Council; consider all matters relating to those Trusts including to receive reports on any matter, including the property and financial implications concerning those trust's assets.
- 9.3. The Charities Act 2011 sets out the requirement for Charitable Trustee to maintain accounting records, submit annual returns if gross income exceed £10k and for lower

income charities where income exceeds £25k to be examined by an independent examiner (by virtue of sections 130, 169 and 145).

## **10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1. The Council is subject to the following duties in relation to Charitable Trusts:
- Fiduciary duty as Trustee
  - Contractual duty as the nominee of Fields in Trust (where this applies)
  - Statutory duty as Charity Trustee
  - Statutory duties as a local authority landowner (where this applies)
- 10.2 The costs of an independent examination of the accounts will be around £300 for each of the two charities based on one day of SIAS time.

## **11. RISK IMPLICATIONS**

- 11.1 There is a risk that the non-submission of annual accounts and/or returns may result in a financial penalty being levied by the Charities Commission.
- 11.2 All charities must keep accounting records, and prepare annual accounts which must be made available to the public on request, which may represent a resource requirement.

## **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. There are no equalities implications arising from this report.

## **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 HR implications arising from this report.

## **16. APPENDICES**

- 16.1 Appendix 1a- Financial Statements for Hitchin Town Hall Gymnasium and Workman’s Hall Trust  
Appendix 1b- Annual Report for Hitchin Town Hall Gymnasium and Workman’s Hall Trust  
Appendix 1c- Responses to questions for Hitchin Town Hall Gymnasium and Workman’s Hall Trust  
Appendix 2a- Financial Statements for King George’s Field Hitchin  
Appendix 2b- Annual Report for King George’s Field Hitchin

Appendix 2c- Responses to questions for King George's Field Hitchin  
Appendix 3a Costs incurred in relation to Smithson Recreation Ground

**17. CONTACT OFFICERS**

17.1 *Ian Couper, Service Director: Resources*  
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**18. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

18.1 None