

***PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT**

TITLE OF REPORT: GRANTS & COMMUNITY UPDATE

REPORT OF: THE POLICY & COMMUNITIES 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 to 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 Committee considers allocating funding from their discretionary community budget towards the projects below:
- 2.2 **£1,285** to Garden City Samba to provide on-line training resources for new members, as outlined in 8.1.1
- 2.3 **£2,000** to Khalsa Youth Football Academy towards a young leader's project aimed at 14- to 18-year-olds, as outlined in 8.1.2
- 2.4 **£1,000** to Letchworth Garden City Bowls Club towards purchase of broken ditch units, as outlined in 8.1.3
- 2.5 **£2,169** to Made In Clay CIC towards the purchase of shelves as outlined in 8.1.4
- 2.6 The committee consider the reallocation of the **£2,000** for WISPA into the base budget as outlined in 10.2

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| 2.8 | 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 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 spreadsheet, 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 if the committee has sufficient funds in the 2021/2022 budget. As outlined in item 10.

8.1 Grant Applications

8.1.1

Applicant Project	Garden City Samba To provide video training resources for existing members of the band and to encourage new people to join.
Sum requested	£1,285
Total project cost	£2,285
Match funding	£500 Cllr Bhartwas, £500 Cllr Hone,
Previous support	2010-2014: £1,315
NHDC Policy met	Yes
Council objectives	Be a more welcoming and inclusive Council Build thriving and resilient communities Enable an enterprising and co-operative economy

Garden City Samba aim to provide training and development opportunities in Brazilian Carnival percussion/music skills through weekly classes. They also entertain the local community and general public through performances. The group currently has 32 members.

Over lockdown, the group were funded by the Heritage Foundation to produce some online training resources to keep members engaged when they were unable to meet as a group. These have proved so useful that we would now like to add new resources for the remaining pieces of our repertoire.

This grant would help the group to provide video training resources for recently joined and existing members and to provide free instrument training video resources to encourage new people to join the group in the future.

They would also now like to add some specific instrument training to their online resources, which can help beginners develop their skills between classes. After the seclusion of the lockdown, there has been a rise in membership as people look to join community groups. These resources would help new members integrate into the band.

The group's Musical Director and one of the band members are being utilised, which means that they can produce professional standard resources at reduced rates.

The resources being developed will be available on the group's website, accessible at all times. The weekly 2hr classes are ongoing and held on Tuesday evenings, from 7-9pm at Jackman's Community Centre.

8.1.2

Applicant	Khalsa Youth Football Academy
Project	Community hub/Futsal community centre.
Sum requested	£2,000
Total project cost	£7,500
Match funding	£3,500 KFA bursary budget (events fundraiser), £2,000 fundraising through tournaments
Previous support	2018: £2,500 to help develop young people for mentoring
NHDC Policy met	Yes
Council objectives	Be a more welcoming and inclusive Council Build thriving and resilient communities

Khalsa Youth Football Academy (KYFA) aim to use the power of Futsal and football to:

- Bring community groups together
- Develop young leaders
- Support Police in the community tackling Hate Crime
- Support vulnerable members of the community
- Provide bespoke programs for families with Special needs children

During the pandemic KFA set up food distribution programs for vulnerable members of the community and provided zoom sessions for support and reducing isolation with talk backs and fitness sessions.

Due to over subscription on a young leader's project, the group want to provide another safe community hub and Futsal centre which will see the community benefit from a diverse project promoting leadership through different cultures and backgrounds.

The centre would provide:

- A platform for youngsters 14-18 to participate in futsal and community engagement
- Officiate sessions
- The chance to become coaches and young leaders
- Community events
- The ability to gain a Qualification JFL Leadership award

Many people will benefit from this project, including:

- Young Leaders 14-18
- Younger age 8-14
- Children with Special needs
- The community will benefit from a Diverse project promoting leadership through different cultures and backgrounds
- Previous programs have seen graduates become PHD students, doctors, business owners, professional footballers, factory workers, volunteers, young mentors and tradespeople and retail staff. All paying taxes to benefit the community.

All participants are Letchworth based, with 40% from Glebe Road industrial area, 40% from Wilbury and 20% from other areas including Jackmans, Lordship Manor Park Area.

Any money awarded would be spent on venue hire, candidate packs for the JFL award, course mentor, tutor on the workshops for assessments and the assessor on final assessment, officiating costs, training equipment and casual support staff/coaches/mentors.

The project will get sustainability once funding has ceased with young leaders becoming qualified volunteers and community event co-ordinators to continue the project.

8.1.3

Applicant	Letchworth Garden City Bowls Club
Project	Ditch repair
Sum requested	£1,000
Total project cost	£1,194
Match funding	£194 raised from membership and match fees.
Previous support	2009: £1,000 towards pavilion security shutters
NHDC Policy met	Yes
Council objectives	Be a more welcoming and inclusive Council Build thriving and resilient communities

LGC Bowls Club provide bowling, sporting and other incidental recreational facilities for club members; providing an opportunity for the local community of all ages to play bowls and develop their sporting potential.

Membership of the club is open to everyone wishing to join. Although the green is located on Norton Common, the group have members from all parts of Letchworth and nearby villages.

Part of the ditch surrounding the bowls green is broken. If it deteriorates any further it could form a health and safety hazard, and possibly make part of the green unusable for formal matches. The ditch is an essential requirement of the playing area under the rules of the game. The group would spend any monies awarded on removing and replacing the broken ditch units, hopefully in time for the start of the new season mid-late April 2022.

By maintaining the playing area in good condition and to a high standard, the club is kept accessible and available to all residents who wish to play bowls.

Bowls is a sport that is not as physically demanding as other types of exercise, and consequently it is particularly popular with older people, and people who may have mobility difficulties, but who nevertheless can continue to play and enjoy the exercise and social interaction to be derived from club membership. A number of friendships are formed between club members, helping to combat social isolation that can easily happen to elderly or frail people living alone, and also provide support for carers, for example people living with a relative with dementia.

The existence of grass-roots sports clubs is a factor in a healthy and thriving community. Yet many clubs, including bowls clubs, are struggling to survive because of increasing costs and reduced funding opportunities. The group is a successful and thriving club and are able to meet our running costs, but one-off significant costs such as this are not possible without external support.

8.1.4

Applicant	Made with Clay Studio
Project	Additional shelving
Sum requested	£2,169
Total project cost	£2,669.60
Match funding	£500 fundraising.
Previous support	2020: £1,800 towards the lease for Vasanta Hall
NHDC Policy met	Yes
Council objectives	Be a more welcoming and inclusive Council Build thriving and resilient communities Enable an enterprising and co-operative economy

Made with Clay Studio is committed to developing a positive and creative space for all members of the community to engage with ceramics and each other.

They offer specialist support to all, whether the makers are just beginning or working towards running their own practice. As a community-orientated organisation the group creates access to creativity for those often excluded in society because of their additional needs or low income.

Made with Clay offer classes for both wellbeing and skill development. Alongside this, they develop local artists and offer apprenticeships, and provide accessible classes for families and young people working in partnership with local schools.

The group currently have 50 people regularly attending each week within the last year 120 people attending one off events such as exhibition and demonstrations. This will grow as COVID restrictions begin to ease and they develop and grow their work with more vulnerable groups and schools.

As the community has grown, Made with Clay need to have more shelving to house the work created as it is waiting to be fired or dries out.

They have worked with a number of suppliers to source the most ethically sound and cost-effective solution.

As they are a community interest company all money is put back into the business and the increased cost of energy and maintenance of the building is having an impact on reserves.

The group are asking for funds for frames for extra shelving units - they will supply the wood for the shelves. This grant would enable the group to increase their capacity and ability to reach more people and help to ensure their future as it will allow them to reach a point where they are sustainable allowing for increases in expenses such as energy.

Made with Clay have and plan to further develop working with vulnerable groups focusing on mental health and wellbeing improving resilience and tackling social isolation. In addition, they support use of their facilities for existing artists and people trying to start their own creative industry business. They plan to have a shop of goods made at Vasanta in the entrance hall - allowing an outlet for local artists to start in business, such as ex-students Alice Sparkes (Little shop of Pots) Fran Hale, George Bedford, and Ann Walker.

8.2 Community Engagement Update and previous grants awarded

8.2.1 Community Engagement Team

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

- The new group for Hong Kong Chinese was launched in December at an event at St Francis School attended by Community Engagement Team Leader, the Leader of the Council Cllr Dennis-Harburg and County Councillor Terry Hone. They have started their English as a Foreign Language Classes based at the Ickneild Centre. They are working in partnership with the North Herts Minority Ethnic Forum who received pump priming grant of £2,500 to get the project underway. Unfortunately, the funding from the East of England Local Government Association was provided to County who decided their language provision would be commissioned under the procurement process. It is hoped that the NHMEF will make a bid to be a training provider under that process to continue the work of the group.
- Processing grants to utilise the £100k Health Protection Board funding to assist the community's recovery following the Covid 19 Pandemic. Currently 16 grants being processed in this round and we're now applying for a further £50k for another round. We have a waiting list of five applications.
- Processing and working with Food Provision Groups to distribute the Winter Support grants and the new Household Support Grants, either by direct funding or provision of supermarket vouchers.
- 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

- 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.

8.2.2 Previous Grants Awarded

Norton Green Care: The organisation was awarded funding last year towards the purchase of the portaloo on the allotment site in Norton. Ray Wilson has reported that the project has been running really well this year, with approximately 20 participants using the service on site. The Norton project is specifically for those with special needs, disabilities and mental health issues or are vulnerable for some reason or another. The toilet has been of real value as it has allowed those with conditions that mean they can not be too far away from toilet facilities can benefit from the project.

Green Care is going from strength to strength this year and are in the process of expanding their services. They have secured another plot of land belonging to Settle which is behind the houses on the Crescent. This will form part of a new social enterprise working with unemployed to grow and sell food.

In addition, they are working in partnership with the Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation who have provided Green Care with a further 0.7-acre site at Standalone Farm. They will be creating a farm shop on site that will sell the produce and aim for the project to be totally self-sufficient.

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 There is an amount of £2,000 allocated (but not spent) to the Wilbury and Ickneild School Parents Association (WISPA). As it has now been 12 months since the decision to allocate this funding under the conditions of the grant criteria, we are able to withdraw the offer of funding and reallocate to the base budget.

The group are still waiting on planning permission, but this has been applied for.

Members can choose to keep the funding available for this purpose until the next meeting in June 2022 and if the project still has not commenced by then the situation can be reassessed.

10.3 The current balance in the Committee budget available to allocate stands at £7,410.

10.4 The grants for this meeting total £6,454, this would leave £956 to carry over to the next financial year.

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

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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