

LETCHWORTH COMMITTEE
5 JULY 2017

***PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT**

AGENDA ITEM No.

7

TITLE OF REPORT: GRANTS & COMMUNITY UPDATE

REPORT OF THE STRATEGIC DIRECTOR OF FINANCE, POLICY & GOVERNANCE

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: 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 be recommended to consider the provision of grant funding to the organisations outlined below:
 - 2.1.1 Hertfordshire Multiple Sclerosis Therapy Centre - £1,130 as outlined in 8.1.1
 - 2.1.2 Armed Forces Day - £850 as outlined in 8.1.2
- 2.2 That the Committee endorses the actions taken by the Community Officer to promote greater community capacity and well-being for Letchworth.

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 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 end of year Area Committee budget balances for the 2016/17 and Appendix 2, 2017/18 Committee budget.
- 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 for Consideration

8.1.1 Hertfordshire Multiple Sclerosis Therapy Centre (HMSTC)

Many people with Multiple Sclerosis (MS), and other neurological conditions, need ongoing physical therapies. For those who are confined to a wheelchair one hour a week of physical therapy can maintain quality of life as much as possible. It is no longer a statutory obligation of the NHS to provide ongoing physical therapy for those with severely disabling neurological conditions. The statutory provision consists of 6 treatments in an 18-month period for those who have a chance of being rehabilitated in that short period. This leaves most of our people outside statutory provision.

Those who can afford private therapies may be able to fund their own treatment, however many of those who suffer with long term conditions are unable to work and therefore often are disadvantaged financially, leaving them without the option of ongoing physical therapies which could slow the progress of their condition, improve their health and avoid the ongoing deterioration.

The services provided at the Hertfordshire MS Therapy Centre in Letchworth work to provide a range of therapies that prevent people losing the ability to walk, becoming house bound or bed bound. In June 2016 they held 768 therapy sessions to 185 clients with clients attending 1 therapy on average a week. This equates to over 9,000 therapy sessions a year. Each treatment is part of a life changing series.

In order to ensure the maximum access to their services to those who need them, they charge the lowest possible amount - an average of £20 for a one-hour treatment session - and offer free or subsidised treatments to clients who would otherwise be unable to access the service. They also assist clients who are currently employed to remain in employment.

The MS Therapy Centre are requesting £1,113 towards the cost of training staff to provide specialist Pilates sessions aimed specifically at those with MS and other neurological conditions.

The importance of this approach is backed up by research that shows half the people living with MS in the UK who aren't currently employed were forced to stop working within three years of their diagnosis according to a report released recently (The MS International Federation's (MSIF) Global Employment Report 2016).

In a recent study, by the University in Turkey, in addition to showing physical performance improvements associated with traditional exercise, MS patients also improved their balance, had less fatigue, and improved their scores on a cognitive test and reported a better quality of life.

The beneficiaries of the Pilates programme will have improved physical performance, better balance, less fatigue, and improved cognitive functioning and an overall better quality of life.

The project will tackle disadvantage as many of their clients are drawn from the Jackmans estate in Letchworth which has higher levels of deprivation. Further, neurological conditions have a range of debilitating effects which can include social isolation, inability to work and susceptibility to depression. The programme will enable people to maximise their engagement in leisure, social groups and employment.

8.1.2 Armed Forces Day Event 2017

Armed Forces Day is a national event that celebrates and recognises the work of all the armed and uniformed services. This always takes place on the last Saturday in June, this year it's the 24th. The Letchworth branch of the Royal British Legion (RBL) have organised an event to celebrate Armed Forces Day on Broadway Gardens since 2013 making 2017 the fifth year. The Letchworth committee have provided funds each year towards the event for items such as the hire of a stage, public address system and generators. This year see's a change in the organising committee as the former chair of the Letchworth RBL has stood down due to personal issues.

The treasurer of the Letchworth RBL has now taken over as event organiser. The last minute change in leadership has meant that unfortunately some tasks such as seeking funding towards the event has been over looked. It is too late to apply to Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation who has provided £1000 grant funding in previous years.

The committee have a separate bank account specifically for the Armed Forces Event which holds reserves of £1,980 and they have raised £100 from a coffee morning in addition to £300 sponsorship from local businesses. The event costs in the region of £2000 to put on each year and the Committee are requesting £850 grant funding from Letchworth Committee budgets to cover the cost of Public Address system, gazebo, Male Voice Choir and St Alban's pipe band.

8.2 **Update on previous Grant Awards**

8.2.1 Impact Youth Club

Following an award of £1,000 to the Impact Youth Club at the meeting in March 2017, the committee have yet to provide bank details or evidence that they have signed up to Pro-Action in order to access training, DBS checks and safeguarding policies. Therefore, the funds have yet to be released.

8.2.2 Herts Young Carers (HYC)

HYC were provided with £1,400 grant funding in June 2016 under delegated authority of the Head of Policy and Community Services together with the Executive Member for Community Engagement and Rural Affairs as the Letchworth Committee was inquorate at the meeting.

The funding provided support for 5 young people from Letchworth to attend HYC sessions for a period of one year.

8.2.3 North Herts Road Runners (NHRR)

NHRR received £1,500 grant funding towards the start up costs of a Town Centre running event. This took place on 10th July with approximately 500 people attending and a large crowd of spectators. NHRR have £1000 raised from last year's event to use for future events.

Unfortunately they are not planning to repeat the event in 2017, as they have had to concentrate their efforts on this year's Greenway Challenge event.

However, they have been liaising with Tom Hardy (Letchworth Town Centre Manager) regarding holding the event in 2018.

8.2.4 Hertfordshire Disabled Cricket Association (HDCA)

HDCA received £800 grant funding in June 2016. The facility based in the Letchworth Free Church hall had over 350 participants from June 2016, to February 2017.

See below an update on progress provided by Richard Hill from HDCA;

"We continue to work with this group on a weekly basis and the numbers attending are very consistent with little sign off a drop off.

Up until now we have been using the hall at the Free Church to run the sessions as the vast majority of participants attend the day service run from there. Now that the better weather is coming (allegedly!!), we will be using the outdoor facilities at Letchworth Cricket Club. This gives the group the opportunity to play in a 'cricket club' environment whilst getting a welcomed breath of fresh air!!

We have managed to secure further funding to keep the group running for a further 12 months through Active North Herts and as such we now report to them periodically with our numbers and expenditure etc.

We are really keen for this group to continue as we are really seeing some amazing benefits with the group. Not only are the group's health and fitness improving, but the social return from the group is huge.

We are seeing people who were once unable to make a coherent decision actually now debate and conclude with solutions before implementing. Things that we all do every day and take for granted are now being experienced by the people in this group who previously may have been forgotten."

8.3 Update on Community Engagement

8.3.1 Cycle Rack Project

The Communities Team have been working in partnership with Letchworth Transition Towns on a project to provide cycle racks to schools, community facilities and central locations in order to encourage sustainable transport in the town. This project will be utilising Section 106 funds set aside for sustainable transport.

8.3.2 North Herts Youth Providers Micro Conference on 5th April

The Youth Providers Micro Conference took place in early April. The event aimed to provide a networking opportunity to organisations providing services to children and young people across the district. The 'micro' element meant that the conference was kept short (just 2 hours) the time limit provides a focus for participants to get the most out of the event. There were three short presentations providing information on funding, volunteering, mental health first aid training and the current provision from Youth Connexions followed by market place networking. 11 organisations provided displays and 40 people attended. Feedback was extremely positive with everyone requesting that the conference be made an annual event.

8.3.3 Cheap as Chips

Mrs Pauline Woreland has been leading a group of dedicated volunteers since 2008 to provide Cheap as Chips serving a lunch of egg and chips in Brotherhood Hall each Thursday. Mrs Woreland has decided to retire from this voluntary role and as the remaining volunteers were not able to take over the management of the group they have decided to cease their operation.

The project will be greatly missed by the local community especially those dealing with social isolation or who are financially disadvantaged as these were the target group benefitting from the service.

The Communities officer would like to express gratitude to Mrs Woreland and all the Cheap as Chips volunteers for all their hard work over the last 9 years.

8.4 **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 The Terms of Reference in relation to Area Committees confirm that they may establish and maintain relationships with outside bodies/voluntary organisations which include discretionary grant aid/financial support but excluding grants for district-wide activities. The Committee has delegated powers, as a body, 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 as outlined in in Appendix 1 was £19,500. Within the previous financial year the committee provided grant funding of £16,308 leaving a carry over amount of **£3,192**.

As outlined in Appendix 2; the discretionary grant budget for this year is £19,500 therefore providing a total of **£22,692** available to provide grant funding to eligible groups and organisations.

Any grant funding will be utilised from the 2016/17 carry over amounts in the first instance.

The total amount of grant funding requested equates to £2,630 which if awarded will be taken from the 2016/17 carry over amount.

11. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 There are no relevant risk entries that have been recorded on Covalent, 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 All projects that are assigned area committee funding are assessed to ensure that they do not negatively impact on any part of the local community. The only deviation to this is where a minority or marginalised group may specifically receive funding or allocation of resources to address a particular area of need or 'gap' in provision. In this respect funding to Hertfordshire Multiple Sclerosis Therapy Centre proposal is specifically aimed at marginalised groups.

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 - End of 2016/17 financial year budget sheet
- 15.2 Appendix 2 - 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