

LETCHWORTH COMMITTEE
DATE: 16 OCTOBER 2019

PUBLIC DOCUMENT

TITLE OF REPORT: GRANTS & COMMUNITY UPDATE

REPORT OF: THE POLICY & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT MANAGER

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

COUNCIL 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 Committee Grant budgets.
- 1.2 To bring to the Committee's attention details of recent requests received for Committee Grant Funding, made by community groups and local organisations.
- 1.3 To advise the Committee of the activities and schemes with which the Community Engagement officers have been involved in.
- 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 considers allocating funding from their discretionary community budget towards the projects below:
- 2.2 **£5,000** to Resolve towards setting up utilities in their new town centre premises as outlined in 8.1.1
- 2.3 **£1,500** to Howard Garden Social and Day Care Centre to install new security shutters as outlined in 8.1.2
- 2.4 **£1,450** to Imajica Theatre Company to go towards the December Community Pantomime as outlined in 8.1.3.
- 2.5 **£1,451** to Woof n Wag to build a sensory garden for dogs and humans as outlined in 8.1.4
- 2.6 **£700** to Kings Community Church for a joint project to run a Christmas Café in Letchworth Town Centre as outlined in 8.1.5
- 2.7 That the Committee endorses the actions taken by the Community Engagement team 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 Engagement Team.
- 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 voluntary 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 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 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. Under the current grant criteria there is no upper limit outlined for the amount of grant funding to be allocated which can be decided at the Committee's discretion.
- 7.2 Members are asked to note the information detailed in Appendix 1. Letchworth Committee Budget Spread sheet, which relates to the Committee budget balances for 2019/20. The spreadsheet also details pre-allocated sums carried forward from the previous financial years, including balances and past expenditure.

8. RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS

8.1 Grant Applications

8.1.1

Applicant Project	Resolve Supporting the treatment and rehabilitation of people suffering from substance/alcohol misuse problems and homelessness.
Sum requested	£5,000
Total project cost	£50,648.99 (relocation cost)
Match funding	£274,418.00 (includes Big lottery 3 year revenue funding)
Annual expenditure	£266.2k
Funds held	£140,576.15 (29/07/2019)
Previous support	£1,274 – December 2016 from Hitchin Committee
NHDC Policy met	Yes
Strategic objective met	Prosper and Protect, Responsive and Efficient

Resolve is abstinence based structured drug & alcohol treatment day service for adults. They support people with substance / alcohol addiction issues, who are homeless, sleeping rough and/or at risk of immediate homelessness.

Resolve supports people by way of a range of therapeutic services; group therapy, one-to-one counselling, key work support including access to a wide range of services both in-house and delivered by partner organisations and access to housing through partnership with housing providers both social and sheltered accommodation.

Resolve is the only drug & alcohol service in Herts who also deliver street work. Our street workers go out onto the streets to find people and to support them into treatment, into accommodation and then onward into independent living in combination with a structured treatment programme as appropriate.

Having operated successfully for many years at their Welwyn Garden premises, Resolve wanted to expand the service into North Hertfordshire. They are currently located at the Westmill Community Centre in Hitchin however; their main client group would find the service easier to access from a Town Centre location in Letchworth.

As Letchworth is a hub for other services such as the Council offices, Jobcentre, Citizens Advice people with housing issues would be travelling to this area. If in addition they have addiction issues then Resolve will be well positioned nearby to drop in to.

They have been offered a 10 year lease on a Letchworth town centre premises by the Heritage Foundation. The building is part of a former shop unit on Leys Avenue which is why the utilities need to be separated from the other part of the building.

This is a substantial project to relocate an organisation that will provide a very valuable service within the Town hence the request is higher than the £1,500 recommended upper limit. Given the amount of carry forward from last year there are more than sufficient funds within the budget to accommodate this.

8.1.2

Applicant Project	Howard Garden Social and Day Care Centre Purchase replacement security shutters for the entrance
Sum requested	£1,500
Total project cost	£1,914
Match funding	£414.00 Funding raised from their Spring Fair event
Annual expenditure	£55,258
Funds held	£172,010 (restricted)
Previous support	£4,500 – September 2016
NHDC Policy met	Yes
Strategic objective met	Prosper and Protect

The funding is required for the replacement of the worn out security shutter with an aluminium roller shutter door.

The Howard Garden Social and Day Care Centre provide a place to go for older people. As well as daily lunches at very reasonable cost there is a diary of regular activities to take part in from table tennis to watercolour painting.

This charity last year celebrated its 65th anniversary and is still going strong. It helps to prevent the older people of the community from feeling isolated. Some of the members only have company when they attend the centre and it provides a real life line for many of the members. People can take part in activities, or simply sit and have a chat and a cup of tea.

8.1.3

Applicant Project	Imajica Theatre Company Community Pantomime.
Sum requested	£1,450
Total project cost	£4,950
Match funding	£540 from fundraising £800 from sponsorship and then rest from expected ticket sales.
Annual expenditure	£26,145
Funds held	£1,546
Previous support	£600 in 2015
NHDC Policy met	Yes
Strategic objective met	Attractive and Thriving

Imajica Theatre Company CIC creates interactive immersive musicals, interactive workshops and a theatre-in-education programme for the younger audience, sharing environmental & educational messages. Imajica promote positive wellbeing and encourage young people to actively participate in the arts. As specialists in relaxed theatre which caters for all needs, Imajica adopt a multi-sensory approach, to develop important life skills that can be transposed in everyday life.

Imajica Theatre are requesting funds for their community pantomime programme taking place Saturday 14th and Sunday 15th December with performances at 11am and 2pm on both days at St Christopher School Auditorium Theatre.

The funding requested will provide both affordable and complementary tickets to families who might not otherwise have access to the performing arts in the community. There will be a weekend of high-quality performance in the local community for the younger audience welcoming those with additional needs including those on low incomes.

The performances will be publicised via school assemblies, leaflets in school book bags, social media and vinyl banners placed around the town.

8.1.4

Applicant	Woof N Wag
Project	Sensory Garden for Dogs and their owners
Sum requested	£1,451
Total project cost	£1,501
Match funding	£50.00 from donations, £10,000 LGCHF
Annual expenditure	£42,683.10
Funds held	£7,639
Previous support	None
NHDC Policy met	Yes
Strategic objective met	Attractive and Thriving, Prosper and Protect

Woof N Wag Dog Training CIC believes that everyone should have the opportunity to train and seek advice on behavioural issues with their dogs irrespective of background, income or ability. They want to work with people of all ages and abilities especially those who are older or with mental health issues or disabilities. Woof N Wag's mission is to create a community hub for individuals and families to come together with the aim of responsible dog ownership, bringing people from different backgrounds together and providing a closer-knit community. Their work helps and supports those people who own a dog, thinking of getting a dog and those who have a fear of dogs.

Woof N Wag requires funding towards creating a sensory garden to support dogs (and humans) who need a calming space and will also provide additional mental and emotional stimulation. The garden will consist of plants including lavender, rosemary, marigold, peppermint and wheatgrass which have been shown to reduce stress levels in dogs. They plan to use environmentally friendly resources and recycle throughout the project, such as using bottle tops, Eco bricks and old tyres to create the tranquil space.

8.1.5

Applicant	Kings Community Church
Project	Christmas Café (Pop-Up shop in the Shopping Centre)
Sum requested	£700.00
Total project cost	£700.00
Match funding	In-kind contribution of a shop unit
Annual expenditure	£46,254.56
Funds held	As of December 2018 £12,766
Previous support	£450 - 2017 for a gazebo
NHDC Policy met	Not at present
Strategic objective met	Attractive and Thriving

The Norton Methodist Church in partnership with the Kings Community (Baptist) Church and the Salvation Army aim to join forces in order to run a Christmas Café. Utilising one of the empty shop units, probably in Garden Square Shopping Centre, they intend to open each Saturday through December for anyone to drop in for a cup of tea and toast or a biscuit.

The churches are very aware that this holiday period can be very difficult for many. Issues such as loneliness, isolation, financial issues and mental health problems can all be magnified at this time. Therefore the Café is aimed to be a place where people can come and find support. The Churches intend to have people providing debt advice, provide craft activities such as making recycled wrapping paper and Christmas cards. As well as, craft activities, refreshments, gift wrapping, an 'In the Picture' Photo Booth, local information, advice and access to food banks. It will be a hub for all over the Christmas period offering resources such as a food boutique table, befriending and signposting to other services.

In this instance the funds will be held by Kings Community Church but it will be a joint project.

As this project involves bringing partners together from many organisations it's quite a complex task. For this reason the organisers haven't yet been able to provide all the supporting information to fully assess the application.

However, as the project is obviously time sensitive and would be providing a valuable service to the local community, the application has been submitted to the Letchworth Committee for consideration as is.

The funding they have requested is for basic equipment such as aprons, tea towels, cleaning products, craft materials, publicity costs such as leaflet printing to advertise to parents via school book bags.

Regarding the accounts these are for Kings Community Church and relate to the stipend for the Pastor and the costs involved of running a lively community venue. Funding for this Christmas Café project will be ring fenced.

The following project has been put forward under the delegated decision process as the requested funding was required for an event due to take place before the next Committee meeting on 16th October.

8.1.6

Applicant Project	Project 15 Contemporary Arts Making art available to all by providing free exhibitions and face to face contact with artists.
Sum requested	£485
Total project cost	£485
Match funding	£2000*
Annual expenditure	£0
Funds held	£11.03
Previous support	£0
NHDC Policy met	Yes
Strategic objective met	<i>Attractive and Thriving</i>

Project 15 is a group of local contemporary artists, providing pop up exhibitions to the general public.

*The Letchworth Heritage Foundation has given them a shop unit to use for the whole of September, free of charge. It will be at 30 Leys Avenue, SG6 3EF. The rent would be approximately £2000 if they were to hire it privately.

They estimate from previous exhibitions that 30-50 people will visit the exhibition daily. Anyone walking through the town will be able to view the changing space free of charge.

They will also be encouraging schools and colleges to visit by means of emails and telephone conversations..

Project 15 has endeavoured to provide pop up exhibitions on a yearly basis over the course of several years, since 2011. These exhibitions are open to the general public free of charge, providing an opportunity for visitors to view the art work and engage with the artists who are present. The artwork displayed is different to work that is displayed in a commercial gallery. Amongst the volunteers are two retired tutors and one working tutor, and a mature student studying at Anglia Ruskin at MA level.

They are passionate about art education, fully informed and art should be made accessible for everyone.

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. For example:

- The formation of the Food Provision Group which brings together representatives of organisations working towards tackling food poverty in our area. Best Before Café in Letchworth and Hitchin Food Rescue Hub have been major players, along with the local churches and their school holiday scheme Make Lunch.
- Garden Square Shopping Centre is planning on having late night opening on every Friday in December on the run up to Christmas. The shops will be open until 8.00pm. We have been investigating whether it's feasible to initiate a 'free after three' parking scheme in the Letchworth Multi-storey car park. Officers are currently looking at what the costs would be and would expect those costs to be covered by other means. This scheme has worked in Royston where the, Royston Committee, BID, Town and Hertfordshire County Councillors have contributed to cover the costs. At the time of writing it has not been ascertained whether this scheme would be feasible in Letchworth.
- The first Letchworth Town Talk was held and was met with a good response; Town Centre surgeries are now on a monthly basis.
- After a restructure of the police Safer Neighbourhood Team, we are forging links with new officers

- A first meeting was held at The Grange to address provision for young people- more support is needed.
- Our new Face Book group is up and running, Engage North Herts, bringing together community groups from across the district.

8.2.2 Update on Plans for Plinston Hall

Oren Boder of the OB1 project at Plinston Hall has continued his liaisons with the Heritage Foundation and other similar projects. On advisement he is now taking the project forward as a Community Interest Company.

8.2.3 Update on KIP Education Project

KIP have spent the summer planning and sessions have begun this term.

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.

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 Area Committees have delegated power under section 9.8.1 (a) & (b) 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. Section 9.8.2 (g) of the Constitution in respect of Area Committees' Terms of Reference provides 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 1 Committee budget 2019/20

The agreed budget for this financial year is £11,000 in line with the 20% reduction in grant budgets as agreed by full council.

The carry over amount from 2018/19 was £17,732 of which £3,066 has been used. This leaves £12,866 in the carry over amount and these funds will be utilised prior to spending the 19/20 budget.

The total grant funding applied for in this round equates to **£10,856** including the £485 for Project 15 (agreed under delegated authority). Therefore, if members are minded to agree these applications this would leave £2,280 in the 2018/19 carry forward in addition to the 11,000 in the 19/20.

Leaving **£13,280** in the budgets to provide grant funding for the next two meeting this 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" 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 - 2019/20 financial year budget sheet

16. CONTACT OFFICERS

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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.