

**HITCHIN COMMITTEE  
14 JANUARY 2020**

**PART 1 – 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 **£1,000** to Lions Mixed Martial Arts to assist with the cost of buying extra equipment such as; gloves, shin guards, body pads, boxing bags with fittings and a temporary boxing ring as outlined in 8.1.1 (Attractive and Thriving).
- 2.3 **£543** to Purwell School Association to cover the costs of materials needed to create a learning garden as outlined in 8.1.2 (Attractive and Thriving).
- 2.4 That the Committee endorses the actions taken by the Community Engagement team to promote greater community capacity and well-being for Hitchin.

### **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. Hitchin Area Committee Budget Spread sheet, which relates to the Area 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

<b>Applicant Project</b>	<b>Lions Mixed Martial Arts</b> The purchase of extra equipment – gloves, shin guards, body pads, boxing bags with fittings, boxing ring.
<b>Sum requested</b>	£1,000.
<b>Total project cost</b>	£1,158.
<b>Match funding</b>	£150 from trustees and friends donations.
<b>Annual expenditure</b>	£1,156.
<b>Funds held</b>	£-57.01.
<b>Previous support</b>	None
<b>NHDC Policy met</b>	Yes
<b>Strategic objective met</b>	Attractive and Thriving.

First set up in 2013, Lions Mixed Martial Arts provides community based Mixed Martial Arts classes to children and adults in Hitchin and the surrounding area. They run two classes weekly which are open to all. The first takes place on Thursday evenings for those aged 16+ and the other is on Saturday mornings for those age 4-16. The classes are generally held at the Gurdwara Centre in Hitchin. The objectives of the club are:

- To equip all with Marital Arts skills.
- To keep children and adults active and doing productive things.
- To build children's confidence through mental and physical strength.

The group are requesting £1,000. Under the guidance to grant applicants they are advised that it is reasonable to apply for amounts between £500 and £1,500 given the level of current funding budgets.

However, under the current grant criteria members are at liberty to award any amount they wish up to the available budget as outlined in Appendix 1.

#### 8.1.2

<b>Applicant Project</b>	<b>Purwell School Association</b> The introduction of a learning garden in the school grounds for pupils, families and the community.
<b>Sum requested</b>	£543
<b>Total project cost</b>	£692.40
<b>Match funding</b>	£150
<b>Annual expenditure</b>	£5,300.30 (for academic year ending 31 <sup>st</sup> July 2019).
<b>Funds held</b>	£-928.93
<b>Previous support</b>	None
<b>NHDC Policy met</b>	Yes
<b>Strategic objective met</b>	Attractive and Thriving and Responsive and Efficient.

Purwell School Association (PSA) was set up in 2004. The PSA is an active and supportive group of parents, who help the school to organise events and money-raising activities. One key aim of the association is to advance the education of pupils in the school by:

- Developing more extended relationship between staff, parents, governors and others associated with the school.
- Engaging in activities that support the school.
- Providing and assisting in the provision of facilities for education at the school not normally provided through the school's budget.

Purwell School Association are requesting £543. Under the guidance to grant applicants they are advised that it is reasonable to apply for amounts between £500 and £1,500 given the level of current funding budgets.

However, under the current grant criteria members are at liberty to award any amount they wish up to the available budget as outlined in Appendix 1.

## **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. This involved:

- Offering advice and signposting to assist Westmill Community Centre in establishing a lunch club for low income families during October Half Term. This ran from October 29<sup>th</sup> to November 1<sup>st</sup> 11am to 1.30pm and offered free hot lunches, activities and a food boutique table. Referrals were through the Family Support Worker at Oughton School.
- Arranging the relocation of the Radio Broadcast equipment from Bancroft Centre to the Creative Minds CIC venue in Churchgate – a licence has been issued to Creatives to legally loan the equipment from NHDC and they are currently liaising with HCC to organise collection.
- Facilitating the North Herts Youth Action Network Group which is a multi-agency discussion about problems which may have arisen, services on offer, available funding and sharing of best practise.
- Attending North Herts Families First and Barnardos' Partnership Meetings.
- Collating and distributing a range of Half Term activities across North Herts available to families and in particular those who are disadvantaged.
- Collating and distributing a list of food provision places across the district during October half term (to combat holiday hunger of families who usually receive Free School Meals).
- Assisting with the Democracy Event for Young People held at NHDC to provide an insight into democratic processes, registering to vote and how the electoral process works. This took place on Monday 14<sup>th</sup> October and 19 pupils from 6 schools across North Herts attended. The Community Engagement Team contributed to the agenda, showed educational films and helped with the logistics of the day.

### 8.2.2 Update on Home-start Hertfordshire

Since April 2019, Home-Start Hertfordshire have supported 14 families using the £9140 funding received. Some of these families are still being supported (as they may have started support later than April 2019) and some have now finished receiving support. As a result, most of the funding has been spent and Home-Start anticipate that the remainder being spent in the next few months.

The funding was largely spent on Volunteer Support and Supervision, Staff travel expenses, Volunteer Travel expenses and Resources and Admin support.

Between April 2019 and November 2019, Home-Start received 34 new referrals and has supported a total of 60 families and approximately 144 children in North Herts. The money from their Area Committee Grant has allowed them to support 14 of those families and has also enabled families to be moved from the Home-Start waiting list.

The number of families supported by area is as follows;

6 families in Letchworth

5 families in Hitchin

2 families in Baldock

1 family in Southern Rural (We expect to support another family before the end of our financial year)

### 8.2.3 Update on Hitchin Youth Allotment

Hitchin Youth Allotment received a grant of £1000 at the March 2019 Hitchin Area Committee. The funding has been spent on:

- purchasing child friendly compost bins with removable panels to view the composting process
- creating a second study/work area with folding, removable tables
- renovating the fruit cage area
- implementing fully established cooking activities (there was a successful pilot in 2017 to test its viability)

Hitchin Youth Allotment has completed another packed season with 250 children involved in multiple sessions across the year. Each child attends a series some weekly or fortnightly. Hitchin Youth Allotment has also passed on best practice to a similar project in Stevenage and to a potential project in Letchworth.

### 8.2.4 Update on the Dell from NHDC's Commercial Officer

The Queen Mother Theatre is hoping to use the Dell to host a theatre production as part of the Hertfordshire Year of Culture 2020. I have met with Cllr Hoskins & Andrew Mills separately to understand what the Queen Mother Theatre want to achieve and how this can be progressed. A meeting will be arranged with the QMT & the grounds team to understand how this can be achieved.

#### 8.2.5 Update on Charnwood House (former Hitchin Museum building) from NHDC's Interim Property Consultant

There will be a meeting between NHDC Property Consultants and Charnwood House Management Association on 15th September 2019. The trustees, led by Bernard Eddlestone, were requested to prepare a business plan/feasibility study for the property. Their first step will be to instruct a surveyor to inspect the property. Access to the building has been arranged for 12<sup>th</sup> November 2019.

### 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 A 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. Carry over amounts from the 2018/19 budgets have been fully utilised.

Thus far Hitchin committee has provided £8,375 grant funding from 2019/20 budget, leaving £2,625 to utilise for the two remaining meetings of this financial year.

The grant funding applied for in this round adds up to **£1,543** which, if members are minded to agree these applications would leave **£1,082** for the next Hitchin Committee meeting scheduled for March.

## **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.