

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR OF PLACE**UPDATE ON CORPORATE GRANT AID PROGRAMME****Purpose of the Report**

1. The purpose of this report is as follows:
 - a) To update members of the Grant Aid Sub Committee on key activities being supported through the Community & Voluntary Sector Team
 - b) To seek approval to provide Grant Aid funding to Rushcliffe CVS for the delivery of the Voluntary Transport Scheme in the Gedling area
 - c) To seek approval for a refreshed approach to the Community Commemoration Fund
 - d) To seek approval for a refreshed Arts Grant Aid application round

Information and Advice

2. As a part of managing the delivery of the corporate grant aid programme, the Community and Voluntary Sector Team work in partnership with voluntary and community groups to ensure that Nottinghamshire has strong communities that are safe and thriving. The reality of the challenges faced means that the Council of the future will be different in the way it is shaped, organised and how services are delivered. The Council is committed to working in partnership with local communities, voluntary groups and volunteers to provide services.
3. Work being undertaken by the team which seeks to support ways to develop and strengthen engagement with communities, moving towards a changed landscape of local services with new and innovative models being implemented. The contribution made to improving public services and well-being in Nottinghamshire by communities and the voluntary sector is recognised and supported through both the Council's extensive grant aid programme and direct hands-on support from Community Officers.
4. A welcome addition to the team was the recent appointment of an apprentice through the County Council's apprentice programme. The position we have appointed to is a Community Empowerment Assistant and will be based at our office in Mansfield Woodhouse, the wider team have really embraced welcomed the opportunity to help develop a young person.
5. All 117 organisations, who have been approved 3 year grant aid funding 2015 have grant aid agreements in place and work is ongoing focusing on building relationships with groups to support future sustainability and success. Of those organisations that were not recommended for funding, over 30 groups have responded to the offer of support and diagnostic visits have been either conducted or arranged by members of the team.
6. This support and relationship building is in recognition of the change in recent years of how economic circumstances have drastically changed how organisations are funded with the result that only well organised third sector groups can thrive and provide a valuable contribution to the local community.

Only by being robustly established and equipped to respond to new challenges can the wealth of voluntary sector organisations across the County maximise the positive impact that they have on local communities.

7. The work of the Community and Voluntary Sector Team underpins the Council's commitment to building on its reputation of working in partnership with the community and voluntary sector to help build local capacity. The range of activities which members and officers are involved in, alongside the provision of grant aid funding seeks to help to drive programmes with communities to deliver local solutions and move towards providing services in a different way. Building confident and stronger communities is especially important within the current climate and the Team has been working with different communities to help support local activities which bring individuals together to celebrate the uniqueness of localities. This has included:
 - a) Support to Eton Avenue Growers Community Allotment initiative which encourage local people with learning difficulties and mental health challenges to engage in growing their own produce and selling them to local people and businesses. The initiative has been faced with dwindling volunteer numbers and help with arranging an open day and seed exchange alongside seeking funding for the purchase and installation of a dried compost toilet it is hoped more volunteers will be attracted.
 - b) Working with groups which are operating in areas of disadvantage or that are facing high levels of exclusion or disadvantage, for example, providing support to Kingsway Community Hall to develop a 5 year Reaching Communities Lottery application worth £374,000 over 3 years to enhance services to older people and develop the youth club. Stage 1 of the application process has been successful.
 - c) Working with groups who are going through a period of transition or change within their organisation and are motivated to work with others and share their own experiences and learning, for example, developing a relationship with Vision School Mansfield to develop opportunities for students to engage in community projects with voluntary organisations.
 - d) Undertaking community development work which has a positive and lasting impact on the local community, for example, supporting the development and build of Rainworth Skate and Play Park which has reduced vandalism and inappropriate behaviour in the area, alongside providing leisure and physical activity opportunities for young people in the community.
 - e) Capacity building in communities to support and equip people with the skills and knowledge to help them contribute to their changing communities, for example, work is being developed to establish a 12 month pilot scheme of support for people in the more isolated rural areas of Bassetlaw. The pilot will offer a range of health and wellbeing services within the local community, using church resources, in partnership with the district council, NCC and the CCG and other appropriate agencies such as Advice Bassetlaw. A rural community hub will be created, giving people at risk of, or experiencing social and rural isolation, access to a social network and a variety of services.
 - f) The recruitment and appointment of a Community Empowerment Apprentice to support the team, bringing a young adult's perspective to the challenges ahead alongside learning skills in community development.

Nottinghamshire's State Of Sector Survey

8. The Centre for Regional Economic & Social Research from Sheffield Hallam University has conducted an independent survey of the Voluntary & Community Sector (VCS) of Nottinghamshire. The survey was commissioned by Nottinghamshire County Council and co-designed with representatives of Nottinghamshire's VCS.

9. The survey findings will provide a valuable insight into the contribution the VCS play in Nottinghamshire and help to develop the Council's approach to community empowerment and resilience as approved by Policy Committee in July 2015.
10. Two events have been planned to disseminate the results of the research – 20 October 2015 at the Everyday Champions Centre in Newark and 23 October at County Hall. All Nottinghamshire County Councillors have been invited to attend one of the events and it would be particularly welcomed if members of this committee could attend an event. Delegates will be able to learn about the:
 - a) Anatomy of the Sector - What does the Sector do in Nottinghamshire?
 - b) Financial Position in Nottinghamshire
 - c) VCS Workforce - Paid & Volunteers and the contribution this makes to the County
 - d) Relationships with the Public Sector & with Commercial Businesses
 - e) Relationships with other Voluntary Sector Groups including those that offer support.
11. Most importantly there will be the opportunity to explore the opportunities and challenges identified by the survey and develop plans for more collaborative working for the benefit of Nottinghamshire's communities.

Gedling CVS

12. Members may be aware that Gedling CVS have decided to close after almost 50 years of operation in the Borough, the final day of operation will be 16 October 2015. The Community & Voluntary Sector Team have met several times with trustees and senior staff over the past 2 months to offer support and guidance through this difficult time.
13. Over recent years the CVS have delivered a range of contracts and received grants from the Borough and County Council, they also delivered a number of health related projects on behalf of the Clinical Commissioning Group and its predecessors. These opportunities have diminished over recent years.
14. At the point of closure there will be one outstanding grant and that relates to the Voluntary Transport Scheme – Volunteer car drivers for vulnerable & isolated individuals. This scheme involves the co-ordination of a team of volunteer car drivers and officers are confident that through existing providers that this scheme will be able to continue. It is recommended that RVCS is funded to deliver this service on an interim basis and further work is undertaken with providers to establish how the service will continued to be delivered from July 2016 to June 2018
15. The Community & Voluntary Sector Team are exploring ways of securing support for other areas of work, which includes: like volunteer recruitment and group development, an update on progress will be provided at the next Grant Aid Sub Committee.

Provision Of An On-Line Funding Portal

16. At the Grant Aid Committee meeting in January 2015 members were able to see a practical demonstration of an on-line funding portal which has been developed by a company called idox. The portal provides comprehensive coverage of all available funding opportunities, including European Union, national Government programmes, regional schemes and local initiatives, and is kept fully up to date.
17. Information is continually updated and checked for accuracy by a team of specialist researchers. In excess of 20 full time staff are working on the funding content at all times. The portal will be customised with County Council branding and is accessed by a link from our website.

18. It also includes a number of proactive features that offer users additional value. Automatic email alerts can be set up so they are first to know when relevant new or updated funds are added, as well as signing up to weekly newsletters packed with the latest funding announcements.
19. Users access the funding portal via an email-based registration process, giving the council really useful intelligence on use of the service. Monthly statistical breakdowns are also provided to help evaluate the portal's impact and help demonstrate its value for money. All content is subject to a strict editorial process that ensures the information provided is consistent, accurate and relevant.
20. The portal provides a customised internet based opportunity for the Voluntary & Community Sector to access information on funding opportunities. Members approved the development of the portal for Nottinghamshire subject to Community and Voluntary Sector Team and the Digital Inclusion Team ensuring that any product purchased is designed and implemented in line with the Councils Digital First approach.
21. In the spirit of collaboration and joint working it is recommended that the provision of this service is jointly delivered and promoted by the County Council and the Community & Voluntary Sector. The proposal is that the portal is hosted by Nottinghamshire Together with links from the County Council website making it clear that the service is funded by the County Council.

Community Commemoration Fund

22. The latest round of Commemoration Fund applications were assessed on 21 July and will be supporting 8 projects with awards totalling £2,400. These are contained in the appendix to this report.
23. This fund has successfully attracted a varied range of interest, particularly in 2014, the centenary year of the outbreak of war. As members will be aware this fund is committed to allocate £10,000 per year till 2018.
24. It is recommended that an element of this fund is used to maximise the wealth of World War 1 documents held in Archives which could be developed into education packs for groups of young people to use to broaden their knowledge and understanding of the importance and impact of the First World War. Funding would support the development of information packs, both physical and digital making them as interactive as possible. Themes to be considered include:
 - a) Captain Albert Ball – Local hero, and ace pilot, lots of documents on his life and letters.
 - b) Sherwood Foresters – Local regiment, links to museum at Thorsby, Mercians regiment now at Chilwell Barracks.
 - c) Telegrams and communications – letters from the trenches and from home
 - d) Children in the War – Roman Pegg and Billy Richards diaries and school log books on activities during the period.
25. The broad brush themes are around local people and local history in WW1, with a focus on the local angle compared to resources available through National Archives. These themes fit with curriculum areas of History and Literacy, but could also include communication, visual literacy, arts activities, food of the war and drama ideas especially using transcripts of oral history that are deposited in Archives.
26. Packs could include:
 - Teacher and leader notes,
 - Photos, films,
 - Actors reading transcripts and activities for the class room.

Visits to Archives would be part of the offer to handle original objects visit the building and have a practical activity having used the packs in school. Options to write the materials to be for leaders of any groups not just schools e.g. U3A history groups etc.

27. It is recommended that the CCF grant is allocated to supporting projects as outlined above alongside the continued support to local projects.

Arts Grants

28. The County Council is committed to supporting Nottinghamshire Citizens to benefit from arts projects across the county. Through the Nottinghamshire Arts Fund, grants are awarded to support arts projects which aim to help get more people to participate in the arts in Nottinghamshire.
29. In previous years the Arts Grant Fund has been open to applications bi-annually, it is recommended that going forward that applications are invited to cover 2016 – 18 which will bring the fund in line with the overall 3 year grant aid programme.
30. Opening in January 2016 applications will be invited from individual artists, members of the community, arts organisations as well as community and voluntary groups for projects which require funding up to £5000 per year for 2016 – 18. These should:
- a) Be focussed on developing community engagement and participation in the arts
 - b) Have a minimum 10% funding from other sources as money or as in kind support that can be quantified.
 - c) Take place within the administrative boundaries of Nottinghamshire (this excludes the city of Nottingham)
 - d) Involve one or more professional artists (by professional artist this means a person who earns more than 50% of their income from there practice)
 - e) Benefit the citizens of Nottinghamshire.

The term “arts project” is flexible. It may be a single event, a series of workshops an exhibition with community links, a programme of music an artist residency programme or a festival of arts.

Other Options Considered

31. The report sets out how the Council priorities are being addressed.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

32. To inform Members of Grant Aid Sub Committee of work undertaken to support the community and voluntary sector in Nottinghamshire and to approve recommendations as outlined in this report

Statutory and Policy Implications

33. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (Public Health only), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults, service users, sustainability and the environment and ways of working and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

RECOMMENDATION/S

34. Members are asked to:

- a) Note the work of the Community and Voluntary Sector Team
- b) Approve the allocation of Grant Aid funding to Rushcliffe CVS for the delivery of the Voluntary Transport Scheme in the Gedling area 2015-18 as outlined in paragraphs 12-15 of this report.
- c) Approve a refreshed approach to the Community Commemoration Fund as outlined in paragraphs 22-27 of this report.
- d) Approve a refreshed Arts Grant Aid application round covering 2016 -18 to open in January 2016 as outlined in paragraphs 28-30 of this report.

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Constitutional Comments (SMG 02/10/2015)

The proposals in this report fall within the remit of this Committee.

Financial Comments (SES 17/09/15)

The financial implications are set out in the report.

Background Papers and Published Documents

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

- 'None'

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

- 'All'

