

## HEREFORD CITY COUNCIL

### COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT GRANTS COMMITTEE 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2020

#### MINUTES OF MEETING

**Present:** The Right Worshipful the Mayor Councillor Kath Hey and Councillors Kenyon (Chair), Boulter, Hornsey, Tillett, Tyler and Wilcox.

**Officers Attending:** Steve Kerry Town Clerk, Becci O'Reilly Committee, Events and Contracts Officer.

#### **CD2020/21.56 CONFIRMATION OF MEMBER ACCESS**

The Chair confirmed that all members present were able to see and hear the proceedings and could be seen and heard.

#### **CD2020/21.57 CONFIRMATION OF PUBLIC ACCESS**

The Committees, Events and Contracts Officer confirmed that the meeting was being live streamed to give public access and was being recorded.

#### **CD2020/21.58 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were noted from Councillors Foxton, Oliver, Powell and Stevens.

#### **CD2020/21.59 APPOINTMENT OF SUBSTITUTES**

None.

#### **CD2020/21.60 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The following declarations were made:

Councillor Wilcox non-pecuniary interest in items relating to the Gilbert and Sullivan Operatic Society as their Honorary Vice President.

Councillor Tyler non-pecuniary interest in items relating to Close House, arising from personal knowledge of one of the applicants.

Councillor Boulter non-pecuniary interest in items relating to Close House as a Board Member.

Councillor Hornsey non-pecuniary interest in items relating to Close House as her son attends events there from time to time.

#### **CD2020/21.61 GRANT COMPLETION FORM HEREFORD GILBERT AND SULLIVAN OPERATIC SOCIETY**

The report had been circulated with the agenda and the Chair invited questions or comments. There being no questions the report was noted by the Committee.

#### **CD2020/21.62 CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU ANNUAL REPORT AND REQUEST FOR RELEASE OF FUNDS**

Sonya Gregory attended for this item and was welcomed to the meeting. Ms Gregory introduced the annual report highlighting that the Bureau had achieved its target of recruiting eleven extra volunteers and that enquiries had risen by 146% in the year. Since March 2020, having already looked into home working, the Bureau had adapted very quickly to a radically new situation, working hard to remain visible and accessible. There had been a 181% rise in employment issues since the outbreak, with benefits and relationship problems also rising steeply. They expected a surge in debt and eviction queries as the controls presently in place

on court actions etc are lifted. They have received some external funding from national sources and have added a debt specialist to the team.

In answers to members' questions a number of points were added. The service is not overwhelmed by need at the moment but is growing and adapting constantly. Many new cases are presenting with Covid 19 as the primary cause eg employment, income etc, but the Bureau always probe for underlying issues and this is uncovering a significant rise in mental health problems. Herefordshire MIND have done a training session with volunteers and they are aware of key indicators to look out for and how to sign post people for specialist help. The Bureau started a drop in at Hinton Community Centre but had to stop, this is very much in plan for the New Year, both at Hinton and other centres. It is important to get the advice out to where it is needed. One of the newest volunteers is a social media student and there would hopefully be a much more lively on-line presence in future.

Several members in asking their questions also made statements of personal appreciation for the vital work the CAB does, and for the way it has been able to carry on in very unusual and difficult circumstances recently.

It was then proposed by Councillor Boulter, seconded by Councillor Tillet and unanimously

**RESOLVED That the annual report of the CAB is accepted and that officers are authorised to release this year's grant of £10,000.**

Before leaving the meeting Ms Gregory thanked the Committee and Council for its ongoing support which was vital in maintaining the work.

#### **CD2020/21.63 CLOSE HOUSE ANNUAL REPORT AND REQUEST FOR RELEASE OF FUNDS**

Ben Lea from Close House attended for this item. As there was a second item relating to Close House on the agenda, the Chair proposed to take both items at the same time so that Mr Lea did not have to sit through the rest of the meeting waiting for the second item. This was agreed without a vote.

Mr Lea introduced the annual report and explained how the various Close House projects work and relate to each other. The ongoing grant from the Council covers the cost of running the drop in service and they also run the Youth Council, a music project and the Epics community outreach projects. Idle Hands 2 which is a further extension of community work is the subject of the grant application to be considered after this item. By June all services that could possibly be set up to run on-line were organised. Lots of young people are getting stressed at home or suffering from on-line fatigue. As soon as possible Close House opened up on a pre-booking arrangement which wasn't entirely successful, but was able, by reducing numbers and enforcing good Covid 19 management practice, to open safely for those youngsters that really needed to be there. The pandemic has had negative effects on people already struggling with dis-engagement from school, and who might otherwise have been the subject of Children's Services interventions around drug and alcohol misuse or anti-social behaviour. As a way of offering diversion into more helpful activity the Youth Council and Close House had been involved in orchard planting projects working via the Epics with four local community centres. This had continued with National Lottery funding despite a withdrawal of funds by the Police and Crime Commissioner.

In answer to members' questions and comments a number of points were added, especially that a new application for funding from the Police and Crime Commissioner would be brought

forward and positive commitments from candidates for that office would be sought in the run up to the 2021 elections, and that links with community centres would be an important area to develop further.

It was then proposed by the Mayor, seconded by Councillor Tyler and unanimously

**RESOLVED That the annual report be accepted and that officers be authorised to release this year's grant of £15,000.**

#### **CD2020/21.64 LARGE GRANT APPLICATION CLOSE HOUSE – IDLE HANDS 2**

Mr Lea reminded the Committee that back in January 2019 Close House had been given funds to employ an additional youth worker to counter the effects of county lines in the area. It has proved difficult to engage the most vulnerable young people who were being approached by drug dealers to get involved in this illegal activity, and flexibility in how to use the funding had been very much appreciated as the project was honed by experience. This application is for TIK TOK and burner phones as the youngsters at greatest risk are not well resourced at home and are difficult to contact. In addition, the youth workers at Close House have got a free use deal for Beryl Bikes which makes it easier to go to places where young people congregate and interdict any anti-social activity and offer alternatives.

In answer to questions, the following points were added. The graffiti workshop is on a wall at the back of Close House in an enclosed space. Councillors would be interested to see a proposal for a graffiti wall in a more public location in due course. The apparent rise of some 30% in staff costs with fewer staff does not reflect a substantial wage increase. As contract staff leave or take maternity leave they are replaced sometimes by freelance or self-employed staff on flexible hours, some staff are on furlough some are on Universal Credit. The salary cost picture is therefore somewhat complicated. This information could be clarified in a confidential addendum to the application if it goes to Council, to give fuller information without breaching the personal confidentiality of the staff. Accounts for the year ended March 31<sup>st</sup> 2020 should be ready for Council on 17<sup>th</sup> November and could be added to the proposal. The financial position regarding the Police and Crime Commissioner again will be tested to see if funding can be obtained from that source. However some grant applications require more concrete information than is possible with so much uncertainty surrounding Covid 19. The use of social media by young people is risky and Close House are not the social media police. They do offer practical and moral guidance and are always alert to signs of problems but they cannot control what young people do online, only seek to influence behaviour positively.

After a detailed discussion it was proposed by Councillor Wilcox, seconded by the Mayor and unanimously

**RESOLVED That the proposed grant of £14,950 be recommended to Council as a large grant award, subject to further information about staffing arrangements and the completed accounts for year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020 being added to the supporting information.**

#### **CD2020/21.65 HEREFORD GILBERT AND SULLIVAN OPERATIC SOCIETY – MAIN SHOW AND SCHOOL AND COMMUNITIES OUTREACH PROJECT**

Hannah Roper and Paul Bowman of the Gilbert and Sullivan Operatic Society attended for this item and the Chair welcomed them to the meeting. The representatives gave a presentation including slides of the work of the Society and in particular of the impact of the main show on opportunities for people to take part in professional standard production using state of the

art technical facilities at the Courtyard. The representatives also included information on the schools and community outreach undertaken by the Society as part of building interest in performing arts and offering access to the show. In 2015 this work was grant aided by the City Council, but most years since 1940 the Society has been able to raise enough to cover its costs. The representatives included a pie chart showing how the deficit caused by lost ticket sales from the abrupt cancellation of this year's show due to Covid had been covered and the shortfall which was the subject of this grant application.

The Chair commended Hannah and Paul for an outstanding presentation which had been extremely well prepared and thorough. In answer to questions from members it was confirmed that the new show date is for September 2021 at the Courtyard. The show will enable social distancing on stage by using Trial by Jury with a largely sedentary cast and Cox and Box which only involves three main people. Recognising that in 2021 it will be 100 years since women were admitted to the Bar, Trial by Jury will feature an all female cast in the lead roles. There are two matinee performances, one is for schools and youth groups only and is in school time, one is on Saturday and open to the public. Finally it was noted that with other fund raising, the amount sought had changed slightly and the up to date figure was £2,863.00.

It was then proposed by Councillor Tillett, seconded by Councillor Boulter and

**RESOLVED That a grant be awarded to the Hereford Gilbert and Sullivan Operatic Society of £2,863.00 as set out in the application.**

(Councillor Wilcox asked for his abstention to be noted in the minutes.)

#### **CD2020/21.66 INSPIRATION @ WORK HERE – INSPIRATION SPACE**

Mark and Louise Stevenson attended for this item.

Mark explained that the service is operated from premises above Coffee One in High Town and side signed to provide space for new start ups by local entrepreneurs who need space in which to work. In essence it is an opportunity to work in a professional space, with the helpful disciplines of having a work place and time to be there as a way of breaking out of home grown kitchen table projects. Evidence shows that this kind of support can be crucial in turning a dream into a viable business. No charge is made to users which is an important factor to enable business development in a supportive atmosphere. Getting out of the house and the social interactions of work have been shown to have beneficial effects on mental health as well as the success of new business start ups, especially among people from disadvantaged backgrounds who lack access to spacious homes with good facilities.

In answer to questions from members the following additional points were noted. Although conceptually similar to the start up facility in Rockfield Road, that is for artists and is a studio space. This is a business space for people to go online, use office facilities and develop a business presence to launch their ventures. It was noted that a similar start up facility in Worcester had been extremely successful and that this was a tried and tested approach to enabling business to get a good start. City residents can be identified within the scheme and the proprietors are open to restrictions on funding from the City Council so that it only benefits city residents. Work Here will pool ideas and resources with other groups in the City. The purpose is to have an incubator space, they want people to come with an idea, grow it and leave as they have outgrown the facility and need to start in their own business space with an established project with a good prospect of success.

The Centre is currently open five days a week from 08:30 to 17:30 but could be opened at the weekends from the new year. This will facilitate access to college students without disrupting their formal education and training.

After discussion it was proposed by Councillor Tyler, seconded by Councillor Hornsey and unanimously

**RESOLVED That a grant be awarded to Inspiration @ Work Here of £3,000 as set out in the application.**

#### **CD2020/21.67 BORDERLINES FILM FESTIVAL – 2021 FESTIVAL**

Naomi Vera-Sanso attended for this item.

Ms Vera-Sanso presented the application and added that the whole environment for the arts was extremely mutable at present with a great deal of uncertainty. Otherwise the application covered the essential points that needed to be considered.

In response to questions from members the following additional points were noted.

Staff costs seem high at 30% of total expenditure and the cost of using Malvern as a venue is far higher than the Courtyard for a similar return. Staff work for around three quarters of the year to get everything ready and wages are on British Film Industry levels, but at the bottom of the range. Malvern ticket prices are higher than in Hereford but the basis of funding is quite different, with the Courtyard offering a discounted pass. There is no difference in the gain to the venues for hosting the festival. The Courtyard does better from parking revenues when it hosts the show and passes that on in reduced ticket prices. All the events including the Flicks in the Sticks showings in village halls are staffed by volunteers and the IK notation on staffing costs indicate that this is an estimate of the value of a contribution in kind, not a figure for wages paid. This may give the impression that staffing costs are higher than they actually are. Venues will need to be Covid aware, whatever that means when the show takes place and Borderlines are developing an online viewing facility for people who remain nervous about coming into town centres. This also gives a safety net if there is sudden lockdown.

After discussion it was proposed by Councillor Tyler, seconded by Councillor Kenyon and unanimously

**RESOLVED That a grant be awarded to Borderlines Film Festival of £3,000 as set out in the application.**

#### **CD2020/21.68 HEREFORDSHIRE LORE – NEWSLETTER POST**

There was no representative of Herefordshire Lore present. The Chair invited members to consider if there was sufficient information in the application to make a decision or to propose a deferral.

It was noted that the application was for £900 and not for £600 as stated in one part of the form. Members noted that Herefordshire Lore do really important and interesting work and that the application was in essence a very simple matter and could be considered.

After a brief discussion it was proposed by Councillor Kenyon, seconded by Councillor Hornsey and unanimously

**RESOLVED That a grant be awarded to Herefordshire Lore of £900 as set out in the application.**

**CD2020/21.69 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

**Routine meeting Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2020 at 6 pm**

**Grants meeting Monday 8<sup>th</sup> February 2020 at 10 am**

There being no further business the Chair thanked everyone for their contributions and the staff for their support and closed the meeting at 11:50 am.

Signed .....

Date .....