

HEREFORD CITY COUNCIL

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT (GRANTS) COMMITTEE 22nd November 2021

MINUTES OF MEETING

Present Councillor Boulter (Chair), and Councillors Hornsey, Kenyon (part), Milln (part), Oliver and Stevens

Attending Steve Kerry Town Clerk and Dave Tristram External Funding and Community Support Officer, Becci O'Reilly Administration and Events Manager

(The Chair welcomed Dave Tristram on his first day with the City Council following his recent appointment.)

CD2021/22.45 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Clerk reported apologies from Councillors Carwardine, Hey, Owens, Tyler, Wilcox and Williams.

CD2021/22.46 SUBSTITUTIONS

Councillor Hey had appointed Councillor Milln as substitute and he had indicated he might be slightly late. Councillor Milln arrived at this point, and the Chair thanked him for attending at short notice. Councillor Stevens asked the Clerk to write to all councillors reminding them of the importance of attending committees or sending substitutes as the meeting had nearly failed to reach a quorum, which would have been very embarrassing in view of the external presenters booked to attend.

CD2021/22.47 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Hornsey declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 6 on the agenda.

Councillor Stevens declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 8 on the agenda.

Both interests were recorded in the register.

At this point in the meeting Councillor Kenyon asked if the order of business could be varied to allow for discussion and resolution of each application as it was presented rather than following the agreed practice of taking all the decisions after all the presentations. This was because he anticipated leaving before the decisions were taken. There was no support for this, and no formal proposals was considered. Councillor Kenyon then left the meeting. In response to a question the Clerk confirmed that the quorum for a meeting was four councillors and with five now present the meeting could continue.

The Clerk confirmed that the change agreed at Policy and Resources Committee to allow members declaring a non-pecuniary interest to remain in the debate had not yet been agreed by Council as we were waiting to see if it would be included in a revision of the Code of Conduct by Herefordshire. Where there was a risk of a meeting becoming inquorate if those declaring interests left, it was lawful for the Committee to vote that members were given a dispensation to attend and take part in the debate. Even if they subsequently abstained in a vote, or made no contribution to the debate, their presence did contribute to the quorum. Noting the small number of members present it was,

Proposed by Councillor Boulter, seconded by Councillor Oliver and, with two abstentions,

RESOLVED That those members who had made declarations of non-pecuniary interests be given a dispensation to remain in the meeting and take part in the debate on the items on which they have made declarations.

CD2021/22.48 GRANT COMPLETION FORMS

It was noted that grant completion forms from the following organisations had been received and spend had been in line with the terms of the grants awarded:

3Degreez Allstarz CIC – Summer Holiday Camps

Borderlines Film Festival CIC – 2021 Festival

Catcher Media Social CIC – May Fair 900

Hereford BID Ltd – Christmas 2019

Melody Dance Company CIC – Summer Dance Camp

Royal National College for the Blind – Lawnmower

Work Here – Inspiration Space. On this item it was noted that ill health had prevented the planned appearance of the organisation’s representative.

CD2021/22.49 Annual Reports

a) Citizens’ Advice Bureau

The Chair welcomed Sonya Gregory, Advice Services Manager, to the meeting. Ms Gregory introduced the annual report which is partly retrospective to include some earlier issues which had arisen as a result of the Covid outbreak. The usual way of doing business with clients had been face to face which had changed radically during the pandemic hence funding for phones and IT equipment to enable remote access. Need had risen sharply even with the furlough arrangements and the moratorium on evictions for rent arrears, many people without any experience of the benefits system had been forced to claim Universal Credit, and in many cases with no access to online facilities, which was the only way to make a claim. Long telephone sessions had resulted as people were talked through how to apply. Now the eviction moratorium is lifted the courts have a backlog of cases and the CAB maintain a desk at the court to offer advice which often achieves last minute stays of action while better solutions are found. People are in crisis and desperate for help at this point. The phone service had increased tenfold during Covid and the CAB would like to maintain that as it offers a quick and accessible use of services. They would also like to resource the drop in and appointment systems as soon as possible – at present it is appointment only and somewhat limited. Funding has been successfully sought from the Heritage Lottery Fund which would enable drop in sessions at pre-Covid level to be restored, which was excellent news. Roughly 44% of cases are related to benefits; 40% of claimants have a long term illness or disability.

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

The planned outreach in South Wye began, initially at the Hinton Community Centre, now hoped for at the Kindle as Hinton is fully occupied with Covid support and other projects. If the Kindle Centre doesn’t work out it will be held in Newton Farm. There is anticipated to be a sharp increase in court applications for evictions after Christmas, many landlords are wary

of bad publicity about evictions during the festive season but that goodwill will not last long into the New Year.

Members and the External Funding and Community Support Officer (who had been a volunteer following his departure from his previous post) spoke of the value they placed on the work of the CAB which was seen as essential to community well-being.

It was proposed by Councillor Stevens, seconded by Councillor Hornsey and unanimously

RESOLVED That the annual report of the Citizens' Advice Bureau is accepted and that officers are authorised to release the annual grant of £10,000 under the service level agreement.

Sonya Gregory thanked the Council for its ongoing support.

b) Hereford in Bloom

The Chair welcomed Kevin Knipe, Paul Hodges and Richard Watson to the meeting. The delegates confirmed that the gist of the presentation was in the written report, adding that the City had again achieved Gold Award status, which is estimated to boost tourism and visitors by around 17%. The brochure shows how HiB have much wider activity now than just flowers – they are involved in schemes to reclaim derelict land, plant trees and build community involvement. In the Britain in Bloom judging only 40% is given for horticulture, 30% now for community building and 30% for general environmental impact. This latter category had seen some marks dropped for poor street cleaning despite litter picking co-ordinated with the local activists. Funding has dropped during the pandemic especially from the care homes' sector with one of the largest contributors no longer a local provider and their corporate HQ in Nottingham is clearly less disposed to support local projects than the previous owners. It is likely that within a year or two HiB will be drawing on their reserves to keep basic services going.

In answer to questions from several members, the following points were noted.

The cost of plants has risen recently, despite the constant efforts of Paul Hodges to secure some very good deals. Transport costs are becoming much more significant and free delivery seems to be a thing of the past. Funding generally is very tight, more so for capital schemes such as new planting projects than revenue maintenance and upkeep. There has been no progress on Churchill Gardens and the Committee noted this needs to be picked up by the ward member. The group set up to look at the Blackfriars Rose Garden had done a splendid job and were now virtually free standing, although they still got advice and assistance from HiB when they wanted it. It had proved more difficult to progress advice and support to the individual who looks after the Bridge Gardens by the Victoria Bridge and the Cantilupe Gardens volunteers who wanted to maintain their local control. HiB are happy to be in the background if a group want to get on and do things, and are always ready to help with advice on planting, upkeep, sourcing plants etc.

The good work on Station Approach was noted, although it was also noted that Morrisons had not been able to contribute financially as this was a corporate rather than a local decision. It was suggested that contact be renewed with the Waitrose and Tesco local champions to see if some funding could be found.

Finally Mr Knipe added that he felt the Gold Award was not just an achievement of HiB, it reflected the work of volunteers and contractors in many areas to present the City in a good light.

It was proposed by Councillor Stevens, seconded by Councillor Oliver and unanimously

RESOLVED That the annual report of Hereford in Bloom be accepted and that officers be authorised to release the annual grant of £10,000 under the service level agreement.

c) Close House

The Chair welcomed Ben Lea to the meeting. Ben explained that the City Council funded a number of Close House programmes; the £15,000 pa service level agreement was to fund the drop in and there were separate funds to cover their support for the Youth Council and the Idle Hands programme. This presentation concerned the main SLA project.

The Covid restrictions had been very difficult for Close House, staff on furlough are not supposed to do voluntary work for their employer although it seems some have made contacts in their own time and supported young people. For the last 18 months face to face meetings have not been possible, or only by appointment with strict control of numbers in the Centre, and although the organisation is now making a fresh start it is difficult with three staff having moved on to other areas of youth work. The new volunteer pipeline is almost dry and no-one is doing gap years at the moment which used to provide a steady stream of willing helpers. All of the volunteer training has restarted and bookings are being taken through Talk Community. 91 new young people contacts have been made, mainly through school referrals and business is picking up rapidly. The aim is to prevent harm to the youngsters through risks such as County Lines drawing them into drugs and associated crime. Idle Hands has worked through three outreach programmes in large spaces to enable meetings during Covid, at the Kindle Centre and in the large container unit at Top Park. The whole point of youth work is to find negative behaviour and turn it into positive behaviour before lasting harm is done. The priority is to get the drop in centre fully up and running again as soon as possible.

Several members spoke briefly to express their appreciation of the work Close House does and to thank Ben for his ongoing support to the Youth Council.

It was proposed by Councillor Stevens, seconded by Councillor Milln and, with one abstention,

RESOLVED That the annual report of Close House be accepted and officers be authorised to release payment of the annual grant of £15,000 under the service level agreement.

CD2021/22.50 BORDERLINES FILM FESTIVAL SMALL GRANT APPLICATION

The Chair welcomed Naomi Vera-Sanso to the meeting. Most of the detail was contained within the grant application, and it was noted that last year had been an entirely online festival – there had been no choice. This has brought in some 15,000 viewers to the films and had enabled hard to reach groups and individuals to engage in a new way. This year it was planned

to do a hybrid, some traditional cinema shows at the Courtyard but also some more online viewing opportunities to capture that diversity and range.

After the presentation the following points were noted by members.

The festival shows films that cannot be found in commercial cinemas and makes an important contribution to the appreciation of film as art. The festival absolutely depends on a British Film Institute grant of £42,000 which is expected to be agreed. If it isn't there would be too great a gap in the finance to continue. Other grants from the City Council and Elmleigh are also extremely useful in maintaining the size and scope of the festival.

Given that the festival is now well established there is a strong case for the Council to enter into a service level agreement which would relieve the organisers of having to make a new application every year; they could simply submit an annual report with a request for the following year's funding to be released. Naomi confirmed this would be very welcome if it could be agreed. Continuing with the hybrid elements of cinema shows and online was definitely a strong selling point for funding the festival.

Members thanked Naomi for the presentation.

CD2021/22.51 REACT CLUB CIC SMALL GRANT APPLICATION

The Chair welcomed Richard Crane and Michael Goodman to the meeting.

Michael introduced himself as a retired headteacher whose grand-children used the facilities at React, and as a result he had been volunteered by his son to assist with fund raising. The history and development from a single trampoline into the present impressive facility was recounted. Richard added his personal history of working with young people who wanted to take up gymnastics, trampolining and artistic gymnastics as well as his concern to get equipment for boys to work on as they were significantly under-represented at the Club, and those that did come were restricted in their activities by the lack of bespoke equipment. The high cost of equipment was noted, especially if it was to be at competition standard which was essential for coaching at the higher levels of performance. The leased building had been very expensive to adapt especially as the landlord had not honoured his promises to undertake works, and the particular need to have a very high ceiling for trampoline work meant that most standard commercial buildings would not be suitable, so options to move to cheaper accommodation were not available.

After the presentation the following additional points were noted.

There is a basic charge for membership which is to sign up for a direct debit of £33 per month. There is a reducing hourly rate for specialised coaching at the higher levels of performance. The organisation is now at a level where it needs to be registered for VAT, which is incorrectly stated on the form as not required. This was in hand with the accountant. A large part of the cost of equipment had in fact been covered from a personal loan to the Club by Mr Crane, who explained that his late mother had left him a sum of money to "build your dream" and he had used it in this way to grow the Club. Other applications have been made to the Herefordshire Community Foundation and Community First and Dave Tristram would meet to

see how he could assist with finding other potential sources. About 95% of the children are from Hereford City or the immediate area, a few travel for high end coaching from further afield.

One member recounted their own knowledge of children who had been successfully integrated into the Club – in one case after a bad dog attack had left the child very nervous and withdrawn and in another after their need for frequent toilet visits had not been accepted by the coaches at another club. Richard confirmed that the Club caters for children with learning difficulties, physical and mental health issues and social interaction difficulties.

It was noted that the application front sheet refers to £3,000 but later on a figure of £5,000 is mentioned. After the Clerk explained the limit on the Committee's direct grant awarding powers it was confirmed that the application was for £3,000. There are only two male coaches, which reflects the roughly 20% of coaches nationally who are male. This was an area where apprenticeships to aspiring coaches could be a way of improving the balance of the work force.

Finally Mr Crane extended a warm welcome to any members of the Committee who wanted to visit the facility and see for themselves what was being offered.

CD2021/22.52 HEREFORDSHIRE WALKING FESTIVAL SMALL GRANT APPLICATION

It was noted, with apologies, that due to an oversight the application form had not been included with the circulated papers. although it was on the agenda. The Clerk advised that in order to avoid a wasted trip by the applicants, the application should be heard, but to avoid any prejudice against their application if there were any outstanding issues they be invited to the next routine meeting of the committee to add further information before a final decision was made.

The Chair welcomed Liz Hill and Arthur Lee to the meeting.

Liz presented a video of the work of the organisation in addition to the form which was circulated to members at the meeting. The organisation is now a CIC and as it no longer relies on LEDA funding (which is only for rural areas and includes all of the county except Hereford) it is now possible to have a base in the City. Pre-booking rules which are required by Covid rules had meant numbers were somewhat down last year, although there were still many people wanting to go on organised walks. This in turn had meant a late start to marketing this year, exacerbated by a problem with using the previous Treasurer's client database following her death after many years of supporting the group. Despite that, there were enough people to establish and run the festival for many years to come and demand remains buoyant. The festival works well with the Sculpture Trail and Love Exploring in the City to boost family involvement, and can be used to showcase city attractions. It is also a good opportunity to work with the TIC to take bookings and Liz confirmed she has been talking with the TIC Manager about that. It was hoped to work with local bus providers and to have a city walk every evening during the festival period. There would be close cooperation with the BID to promote post walking refreshment options. Extensive user surveys have been done, and walks are assessed for wheelchair, pushchair and scooter accessibility. Visit Herefordshire are keen to integrate the Walking Festival with a relaunched Herefordshire Trail with a Town Hall event and possibly at another location, for example one with a connection to Elgar.

In further discussion the following points were noted.

This is a good opportunity for online apps to be used to promote the walks and give up to date information about access issues, especially for people with disabilities. The application to Herefordshire Community Foundation, also for £3,000, is not a duplicate it is for different costs from those sought from the City Council. All walks have a leader and a back marker and if anyone is unable to complete the walk before the half way point, the back marker will escort them back to the start, so no-one is left to find their way alone.

The Chair thanked Liz Hill and Arthur Lee for the presentation.

CD2021/22.53 HEREFORD BID (Business Improvement District) FERROUS LARGE GRANT APPLICATION

The Chair welcomed Mike Truelove the Chief Officer of Hereford BID to the meeting.

Mike gave a video presentation in support of the application form and explained the impact Ferrous has had in previous years and how it grew from the first event to the second. It attracts interest internationally, and this year there will be ten static exhibitions over ten days, kicked off by three days of live forging in High Town. This has proved a very effective way of attracting attention in the past. This year there will also be a live smelting to make metal from ore, which is a new feature. The festival is intended to be a world class event with world class exhibits, including the best of the students work from the internationally renowned Blacksmiths College. The festival is also designed to align with the NHS five steps for Covid recovery and address social cohesion and equalities in access and opportunity. School outreach has been part of the festival before, and will be given a great deal of emphasis this time.

In addition to the exhibitions and “have a go” opportunities during the festival, a legacy piece will be created. This will be a metal work sculpture of significant artistic and technical merit which will remain as a lasting tribute to the festival and the skills of the crafts workers who made it. Mike confirmed he is still looking for a permanent high profile site for this to be placed, his first choice would be on Bath Street outside the Police Station.

Foot fall projections based on the previous two festivals indicate around 42,000 with roughly 28,000 being local and the remaining 14,000 being visitors from elsewhere in the UK and much further afield. This is based on accurate footfall counters that eliminate double counting. Both the previous festivals reversed the general trend of declining footfall in the city centre, which is part of the national picture and not unique to Hereford. It is intended that Hereford should join the small group of European cities which are on the Blacksmithing Trail, becoming the sixth member, and the only one in the UK. This will enhance the international marketing reach of the BID through this event.

Herefordshire Council are committing £50,000 to this project and the BID is putting £25,000 of its own resources into it too. The grant sought from the City council is £10,000.

In answer to questions and comments from members of the Committee the following additional points were noted.

The Art College and Hereford Make are involved with the project. Although the BID has substantial reserves at the moment this is the result of delayed programmes due to the pandemic, and will be significantly reduced as funds are deployed to various business support and recovery projects. The amount BID can contribute to Ferrous is restricted by the terms of the ballot under which it legally serves a supplementary levy on business rates, and cannot be arbitrarily increased. The title "Queer Metal" for a project to showcase the skills of the LGBTQ+ community is one which might cause offence to some, but is the term used by the members of the group themselves.

There is an environmental issue with the public smelting plan, as it will involve the burning of coal or coke. Is it possible to use locally sourced charcoal from a renewable forest? This may depend on whether it is intended to make pig iron, which can be smelted over charcoal, or steel which needs the higher temperatures that only come from coke or electric arc furnaces.

If the full amount of grant is not forthcoming from the City Council the programme would have to be curtailed. It would be worth looking at Awards for All in future as the BID seeks to pull out of being a main funder and to become a facilitator rather than a provider of the festival, which hopefully will take on a life of its own. BID members' commercial marketing skills could be very useful to the voluntary sector and Dave Tristram will discuss this with the BID outside the meeting to see what can be developed.

The Chair thanked Mike Truelove for this presentation.

The meeting then adjourned to enable the presentation to be cleared before moving on to consider resolutions in respect of the grant applications.

CD2021/22.54 BORDERLINES FILM FESTIVAL CIC 2022 FILM FESTIVAL

Members were all keen to support this project, which has proved itself in the past, and has adapted well to the difficulties of the Covid emergency. The idea of continuing with a hybrid festival was very welcome. As it was clearly an ongoing project it was noted that this could be the subject of a three year service level agreement.

It was proposed by Councillor Stevens, seconded by Councillor Hornsey and unanimously

RESOLVED That a grant of £3,000 be awarded to Borderlines Film Festival CIC to support the 2022 festival.

That the organisers be invited to submit a proposal for service level agreement to secure funding for three years, subject to satisfactory annual reports, and that this be brought to a future meeting of the Committee

CD2021/22.55 REACT CIC MENS/BOYS GYMNASTICS

Members noted that it was remarkable how much this group had achieved in such a short time, and the level of personal commitment the founder had made to his own project. They were offering a unique facility to the City and should be supported. Local parents groups

were clearly supportive. The project addressed some very important physical and mental health issues, and responded well to children with special needs. It was also noted that the requested grant would not meet all the projected needs and it was possible that the group may wish to make another application next year, which should be encouraged.

It was proposed by Councillor Boulter, seconded by Councillor Oliver and (with Councillor Hornsey recoding her abstention having declared a non-pecuniary interest in this item)

RESOLVED That a grant of £3,000 be made to React CIC this year, and that the grant award letter should make it clear that in the following year, subject to a satisfactory grant completion form being submitted, the Committee would welcome a further application if development of the facilities was continuing.

CD2021/22.56 HEREFORDSHIRE WALKING FESTIVAL 20th ANNIVERSARY CITY FRINGE EVENTS

Members confirmed that they felt they had received sufficient information on the form and the presentation to be able to make an informed decision. It was felt to be a good thing to get the walking festival back up after Covid, and that many more people than before had discovered the delights of outdoor exercise on their own and would be interested in joining a group like this. The only concern was that the festival is county wide, but it was noted that the funding sought from the City Council was specifically for city-based events.

It was proposed by Councillor Stevens, seconded by Councillor Oliver and unanimously

RESOLVED That a grant of £3,000 be made to support the Herefordshire Walking Festival in line with the proposal on the application form for city fringe events as part of the 20th anniversary of the group.

CD2021/22.57 HEREFORD BID FERROUS INTERNATIONAL BLACKSMITHING FESTIVAL 2022

Several members recalled having been to the previous one or two festivals and how impressive they had been. There was a discussion of the projected numbers and it was noted that previous headcounts had been more scientific than those at similar events such as the Knife Angel, where there may well have been a good deal of double counting. The projected numbers appeared to be sound. There was also discussion about the scale of BID current resources, but on the other side it was noted that much of that money was committed to delayed projects that would now be starting and that BID were asking for only the amount they were putting in themselves, and much less than Herefordshire Council. The impact on both footfall and longer term marketing of the City was likely to be positive and substantial. The scale of County funding had been a pleasant surprise, and was believed to be sourced from Covid recovery allocations from the government. It was also noted that the Cathedral were now involved broadening the appeal and scope of the event. There would be no admission charges to the exhibitions.

Some members considered that rather than simply making a contribution to a large budget which might disappear into the general funding, it would be better to attach a proposed grant to something specific. By offering to fund most of the cost of the legacy piece, and having a permanent plaque on that acknowledging the City Council's funding, it would be possible for

the Council to share in the legacy benefits. This would have the same effect on the project as a more general grant, but would be of lasting benefit to the City Council.

It was proposed by Councillor Oliver, seconded by Councillor Boulter and, with Councillor Stevens recording an abstention having declared a non-pecuniary interest in this item,

RESOLVED To recommend to Council a grant of £10,000 to support the Ferrous 2022 project with the specific requirement that the Council's money be used towards the cost of the legacy piece and that this be recorded with a permanent plaque on the piece when it is completed and installed.

CD2021/22.58 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 18th January 2021 6 pm (routine meeting)

Monday 14th February 2021 10 am (grants meeting)

There being no further business the Chair closed the meeting.

Signed

Date