

RECORD OF DECISION MADE UNDER DELEGATED AUTHORITY

PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT

Any interest to declare/ or conflict and any dispensation granted N/A

SERVICE DIRECTORATE: Resources

1. DECISION TAKEN

The provision of funding of **£4232.26** from the Coronavirus Community Support Fund. The funding will assist organisations to meet the needs of the local community response to the Covid-19 pandemic. This funding is divided between the following applications:

£500 – to ‘**Built On Faith**’ towards Providing food and resources to the local community as outlined in 8.1

£3,732.26 – to **NHCVS** towards the provision of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for staff and volunteers as outlined in 8.2

2. DECISION TAKER

Service Director: Resources, in consultation with the Executive Member – Finance and IT- Cllr Ian Albert.

3. DATE DECISION TAKEN:

21st September 2020

4. REASON FOR DECISION

4.1 The Community Support Fund seeks to support essential services which find themselves under increased pressure owing to the COVID-19 pandemic.

This funding will support three specific areas in the first instance. These are:

- Provision of food and essentials
- Mental Health support (including loneliness caused by isolation)
- Domestic Abuse support

5. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

5.1 There are no alternative options being proposed other than those detailed within the text of this report.

6. CONSULTATION (INCLUDING THE EFFECT ON STAKEHOLDERS, PARTNERS AND THE PUBLIC)

6.1 The Members of the Community Facilities Capital and District Wide Revenue Grant panel and Executive members for Community Engagement and Finance and IT were consulted via a virtual meeting held on Wednesday 12th August 2020.

6.2 Consultation with the respective officers and external bodies/groups has taken place with regards to these funding applications.

7. FORWARD PLAN

7.1 This decision is not a key Executive decision and has therefore not been referred to in the Forward Plan.

8. BACKGROUND/ RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS

8.1

Applicant Project	Built on Faith Apostolic Church Providing food and resources to the local community.
Sum requested	£500
Total project cost	£500
Joint funding	£0
NHDC Policy met	Yes
Council Priorities	Build thriving and resilient communities / Respond to challenges to the environment

Built on Faith Church supports the needs of the community in all aspects physical, emotional and spiritual. It is based at the Westmill Community Centre. It has been helping members of the Westmill community before and throughout COVID-19 with food parcels and assistance.

Built on Faith have good knowledge of a range of services to sign post their members to and often refer to CAP for debt support and advice. The church also works alongside other food distributors mostly Foodbank, Feed Up Warm Up, Hitchin Food Rescue Hub and Best Before Café in Letchworth.

As a church and a charity, Built on Faith are reliant on funding to support the work that they do. The funding will help to cover costs such as food, transport, resources and electricity/ gas.

Their work during lockdown involved delivering food to members of the community affected by the Coronavirus who were sick and isolated. The church also provided assistance with emergencies including hospital and vet visits.

There was an established need for support before members of the community entered the lockdown. However, this need has been greater during lockdown, especially with the emphasis on food deliveries which required additional hours and fuel.

This grant will assist in covering the costs associated with the increased demand for the churches support services.

Following discussion by the members of The Panel they agreed that £500 would not go very far in providing food and resources to the local community in and around Westmill in Hitchin.

Therefore, the Panel unanimously voted to recommend the amount of £1,000.

However, there as there is no clear justification as to how any additional funds (above the requested £500) would be spent. Therefore, it is only appropriate to award a grant of **£500** at this stage. Bearing in mind the views of the Panel, the group could make a new application at a later stage to request more funds if they are required.

8.2

North Herts Centre for Voluntary Service supports the Voluntary and Community Sector with advice, training, and support. They also run a range of Community projects that support residents including:

- Community Transport
- Befriending Support
- Home from Hospital support
- Grocery Shopping for those shielding
- Respite Playschemes
- Countywide volunteering project #TeamHerts Volunteering that supports VCSE organisations to recruit and manage volunteers and helps people into volunteering.

NHCVS require funding to help cover the costs of PPE and cleaning equipment for

Applicant	North Herts Centre for Voluntary Service (NHCVS)
Project	PPE for staff and volunteers
Sum requested	£3732.26
Total project cost	£3732.26
Joint funding	None
NHDC Policy met	Yes
Council Priorities	Build thriving and resilient communities / Respond to challenges to the environment

their staff and volunteers to be able to safely carry out roles to support people across North Hertfordshire. Volunteers need masks, hand sanitiser, cleaning products (to wipe down vehicles and surfaces) and gloves.

NHCVS are assisting residents in all four of the towns across North Herts as well as some villages including Kimpton, Codicote, Knebworth, Ickleford, Ashwell, St Ippolyts, Offley and Whitwell.

Demand for NHCVS services has risen astronomically during the past few months due to COVID-19 and the direct support that we offer to residents through our projects. The organisation has recruited and trained over 50 additional volunteers as well as employing a new staff member to manage the high increase in referrals received for residents needing support with prescriptions and groceries. There has also been a large increase in residents wanting to access their befriending services as they feel so isolated and lonely.

Additionally, NHCVS are currently delivering same day prescription requests (approx. 10 per day) which was not offered prior to COVID-19, shopping for those shielding (this number is steadily rising as food parcels are stopped) and offering befriending services to over 60 North Herts residents (and rising).

This grant will ensure that all team members could carry out their invaluable work safely and efficiently whilst adhering to government guidelines.

The Panel unanimously voted to recommend the amount of **£3732.26** as requested.

8.3 Applicant	Community Development Action for Hertfordshire (CDA)
Project	Building resilience within rural communities, combating issues relating to the Coronavirus crisis lockdown circumstance, the increased levels of loneliness and isolation and to overall help build recovery within the remote rural areas of North Herts.
Sum requested	£20,000
Total project cost	£25,000
Match funding	£4,000 in kind contribution from CDA in terms of internal management costs. £1,000 from Herts community Foundation re: Rural Support Network
Funds held	£169,294 as of March 2019
Previous support	None
NHDC Policy met	Yes
Strategic objective met	Yes

Project Proposal for North Herts

CDA Herts would like to undertake a 1-year project delivering a range of rural community-based engagement initiatives and supportive learning and development opportunities. These will target those living and working within rural communities throughout North Herts, in order to minimize further isolation and reverse the detrimental effects the Coronavirus pandemic and lockdown measures have had on rural life.

Engaging Initiatives and Support Services: -

- **Rural Support Networks**

Sustaining existing voluntary help and community action within each village / parish in direct response to Covid-19 related issues and the development of further methods of support to those in most need within rural communities' post lockdown.

- **Village Connections, Village Community Hubs and Rural Social Prescribing**

A three stranded initiative focusing on supporting Village Halls and Community facilities. Playing a pivotal role in helping reduce rural isolation and loneliness and the recognised links to mental health problems and poor health and wellbeing.

- **Village Hall Advisory Service**

A direct support, advice and information service for Management Committees and Trustees for Village Halls and Community Facilities.

- **Village Hall and Community Facilities Network**

Develop, facilitate and coordinate a Village Hall and Community Facilities Network for North Herts.

- **Rural Loneliness Forum**

Promote, recruit and guide North Herts service providers, groups and organisations in the work of the Forum to help highlight and inform other bodies and partner agencies regarding the challenging issues behind rural loneliness and mental health illnesses.

- **Rural Issues Network**

Promote, recruit and guide North Herts service providers, groups and organisations in the work of the Network. In order to inform other bodies and partner agencies in regard to the challenging problems behind rural issues in general.

- **Digital Inclusion (possible 'Add On' initiatives)**

IT tuition and learning opportunities for elderly, isolated and vulnerable people living within rural areas. Delivered at their local village halls, in conjunction with Health and Social Care, Social Housing, and other service delivery partner agencies.

Discussion following the presentation centred around the availability of existing services to North Herts organisations via East Herts projects, and the relevance of funding the proposed works from the Community Support Fund, focused as it was on the impact of the pandemic. Members of the Panel indicated a desire to support the loneliness element of the work programme but that it was not appropriate to use this funding stream. Panel Members asked if there could be other routes that could fund elements of it. Therefore, no recommendation of funding was provided at this stage from this funding stream. The decision makers considered this and decided not to award any funding.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1. Following an urgent delegated decision by the Chief Executive on 3 April 2020¹ the uses of the Reserve have been extended to include "support the response to and reduce the impact of major incidents". This allows it to be used for discretionary spend in response to Covid-19. The referenced delegated decision also "***noted that any discretionary spend in respect of Covid-19 will be approved by the Service Director: Resources as Budget Manager, in consultation with the Executive Member for Finance and IT***".

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 The total of funding recommended by this meeting of the Panel is £4,732.26 taking the total amount that has been recommended by the grant panel to £73,700.

¹ <https://www.north-herts.gov.uk/sites/northherts-cms/files/y%20Item%201b%20-%20Third%20Quarter%20Revenue%20Monitoring%202019-20.pdf>

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 All projects that are assigned to the Grant Panel for funding are assessed to ensure that they do not negatively impact on any part of the local community. The only deviation to this is where a minority or marginalised group may specifically receive funding or allocation of resources to address a particular area of need or ‘gap’ in provision.

13. SOCIAL VALUE IMPLICATIONS

13.1 The Social Value Act and “go local” policy do not apply to this decision.

14. HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

14.1 There are no pertinent Human Resource implications associated with any items within this report.

15. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

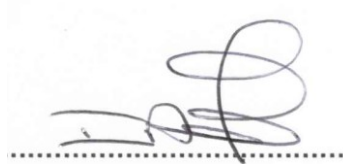
15.1 There are no pertinent Environmental Implications associated with any items within this report

16. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Officers have received and approved the grant application, mission statement and accounts. Covid 19 Special Reserve Fund 2020 (Community Grants) Protocol.

NOTIFICATION DATE

25th September 2020



Signature of Executive Member Consulted

Date ...21st September 2020.....

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "C. J. [unclear]", written in a cursive style.

Signature of Decision Taker

This is a non-Executive Decision. Call-in does not apply to NON-EXECUTIVE DECISIONS