

## RECORD OF DECISION MADE UNDER DELEGATED AUTHORITY

### **PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT**

Any interest to declare/ or conflict and any dispensation granted for the Officer or Executive Member  
[NO]

Any conflict with any Member of the Panel and the bodies concerned [NO] *If yes indicate who and what below*

### **SERVICE DIRECTORATE: Legal and Community**

#### **1. DECISION TAKEN**

The approval of Health Protect Board Funding awards to the following bodies:

- 1.1. **£7,195** to Rotary Club of Hitchin towards the Mental Health Recovery Team at outlined in 6.1
- 1.2. **£3,505** to Open Art Box CIC towards home art workshop packs for people living with dementia and their caregivers as outlined in 6.2
- 1.3. **£3,835** to North Hertfordshire Multiple Sclerosis towards purchase of food for meals, cooking equipment, books, crafts and funds to cover rent as outlined in 6.3
- 1.4. **£16,000** to The Bancroft Players towards resources and alterations to make the Queen Mother Theatre safe for visitors due to the pandemic as outlined in 6.4
- 1.5. **£4,000** to Groundwork East towards the cost of a one-off 'garden clearance' service for elderly / vulnerable residents as outlined in 6.5
- 1.6. **£20,000** to NESSie towards provision of mental health support to children and young people and their families in educational settings and the community as outlined in 6.6
- 1.7. **£9,500** to Imajica Theatre CIC towards a youth engagement project utilising videos and social media tools as outlined in 6.7
- 1.8. **£4,500** to Home-Start Royston, Buntingford and South Cambridgeshire to assist with annual rent costs as outlined in 6.8
- 1.9. **£8,192** to Tilehouse Counselling towards sixteen more counselling sessions per week for teenagers as outlined in 6.9
- 1.10. **£12,280** to Create Community Network CIC towards careers advice and job search sessions as outlined in 6.10
- 1.11. **£4,078.51** to Baldock Arts and Heritage Centre towards sound and projector equipment, and film licenses to run film nights, as outlined in 6.11
- 1.12. **£1,850** to Benslow Music Trust to help facilitate concerts and residential courses, as outlined in 6.12
- 1.13. **£7,670** to Herts Disability Sports foundation (HDSF) towards a Learn to Ride bicycle course for children from disadvantaged areas, as outlined in 6.13
- 1.14. **£2,819** to Phase Hitchin towards the recruitment of two mentors to help deal with the increased need for mental health support in Hitchin secondary schools, as outlined in 6.14

#### **2. DECISION TAKER**

The Executive Member for Community Engagement in consultation with the Service Director – Legal and Community.

#### **3. DATE DECISION TAKEN:**

25 January 2022

#### **4. REASON FOR DECISION**

- 4.1 The Policy and Community Engagement Team applied to the Health Protection Board for funding available to assist the voluntary and community sector organisations in the North Herts District to continue services within the current COVID pandemic. A business case was submitted initially requesting £100,000 for the purpose of

1. Targeted interventions for specific sections of the local community and workplaces
2. Harnessing capacity within local sectors (e.g., voluntary, academic, commercial)

The business case was accepted and NHC received £100,000 to provide grants to organisations supporting North Herts residents through the Pandemic in a variety of ways.

The requests for funding outstripped the amount of HPB funding we had applied for and therefore Members asked that officers request a further £100,000 from the HPB.

A further business case was presented to the Board and accepted.

The £200,000 needs to be utilised by North Herts Council by the end of the 2022/23 financial year.

## 5. CONSULTATION WITH MEMBERS

- 5.1 Consultation on all of grant applications for consideration took place with the Members of the Capital and Revenue Grant Panel at three separate virtual meetings on, 9 November, 17 November, and 15 December 2021.

All the grant applicants provided their presentations to the Panel in support of their applications and answered any questions the Panel raised in relation to the grant funding request. The decisions outlined in this report are based on the Panel's recommendations.

- 5.2 The Panel voted on their recommendations to the Executive Member for Community Engagement at the meeting on 15 December taking the grants from each of the three meetings en-bloc.

- 5.3 The grants considered at the meeting held on 9 November:

**Vote to recommend that Hitchin Youth Trust, Open Art Box, North Hertfordshire Multiple Sclerosis Society, and The Bancroft Players all receive the full amount as requested in their applications:**

Result: Unanimous vote in favour of

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- 5.4 The grants considered at the meeting held on 17 November:

**Vote to recommend that Groundwork East, NESSie, Imajica Theatre Company, Home-Start Royston, Buntingford and South Cambridgeshire, Tilehouse Counselling and Create Community all receive the full amount as requested in their applications:**

Result: Unanimous vote in favour of

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- 5.5 The grants considered at the meeting held on 15 December:

**Vote to recommend that Baldock Arts and Heritage Centre, Benslow Music, Phase, and North Herts Disability Sports Foundation all receive the full amount as requested in their applications:**

Result: Unanimous vote in favour of

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## 6. APPLICATION DETAILS

### 6.1 Rotary club of Hitchin Tilehouse

<b>Applicant</b>	<b>Rotary club of Hitchin Tilehouse (applying on behalf of Hitchin Mental Health Recovery Team)</b>
<b>Project</b>	Mental health support for the young people in Hitchin on returning to school during the pandemic and after lockdown.
<b>Sum requested</b>	<b>£7,195</b>
<b>Total project cost</b>	£30,675
<b>Match funding</b>	£15,480 balance of grant from Valiant Trust £8,000 grant from Hitchin Youth Trust
<b>Previous support</b>	£5,000 for this project in November 2020 from the Covid Support Fund utilising Council reserves
<b>NHDC Policy met</b>	Yes
<b>Council objectives</b>	Be a more welcoming and inclusive Council Build thriving and resilient communities

The Hitchin Mental Health Recovery Team is a group of local organisations and charities that recognised the need for additional mental health support for the young people in Hitchin on returning to school during the pandemic and after lockdown.

The Hitchin Mental Recovery Team is made up of these Groups:

Rotary of Hitchin Tilehouse  
Hitchin Partnership CIO (Family Support Service)  
Hitchin Youth Trust  
Grit (Growing Resilience in Teenagers)  
Stand-by-me  
Phase  
Tilehouse Counselling  
Letchworth Centre for Healthy Living  
NESSie

Funding has already been applied for and received from Hitchin Youth Trust, Rotary of Hitchin Tilehouse, NHDC, Counsellors, Valiant Trust and Together Grant (NHS Sir Tom Moore) to support this group which started at the beginning of the academic year 2020/21.

The funding has been spent on support identified by the schools via representatives from each of the secondary schools and from the primary schools. Initially it was felt that this additional support would be required for one academic year only. However, as the pandemic progressed, it has been found that this support will be required during the academic year 2021/22. A detailed breakdown has been provided with their application.

***Amount recommended by the Capital and Revenue Grant Panel: £7,195***

### 6.2 Open Art Box

<b>Applicant</b>	<b>Open Art Box CIC</b>
<b>Project</b>	Home art workshop packs for people living with dementia and their caregivers.
<b>Sum requested</b>	<b>£3,505</b>
<b>Total project cost</b>	£5,205
<b>Match funding</b>	£800 Locality budget - Cllr Tina Bhartwas (Letchworth North)

	£400 Locality Budget - Cllr Terry Hone (Letchworth South)
	£200 Locality Budget - Cllr Paul Clarke (Hitchin South)
	£300 fundraising
<b>Previous support</b>	£2,000 Hitchin Area Grant for art workshops for people living with dementia 03/06/20
	£2,820 Letchworth Area Grant for delivery of art packs to 10 clients 10/03/21
<b>NHDC Policy met</b>	Yes
<b>Council objectives</b>	Be a more welcoming and inclusive Council Build thriving and resilient communities

Open Art Box create and facilitate art projects for people living with early-stage dementia and their Carers. They run regular group art workshops, as well as delivering art projects to people's homes.

The team have been providing home workshop packs for people living with dementia and their caregivers since April 2020, when they became unable to run group workshops. They have built up knowledge, skills, and resources over this period to enable them to support particularly isolated people access a wide variety of engaging art activities from their homes to help support their mental health.

Open Art Box have been supporting over 30 families across Hertfordshire with a majority of these from North Herts. With the uncertainty of the pandemic and despite starting up group workshops again, many have expressed enthusiasm for continuing to have access to projects at home.

The grant would ensure that a further 300 boxes over the autumn/winter period can be delivered, funding art materials, PPE, travel expenses and a member of staff who will manage referrals, answer queries and perform introductions, plan activities, prepare and pack materials, manage volunteers, provide online and phone support, and document and publicise the project.

Funding will benefit up to 25 families across North Herts.

>Fifteen families who currently use the service are still requesting home packs rather than attend the in-person groups – seven in Letchworth, three in Baldock and one family in each of Royston, Ashwell, Hitchin, Tea Green and Radwell.

> With growing awareness of this service, the team has started to receive new referrals from GP link workers as part of the social prescribing scheme and the Occupational Therapy Team, leading to a growth in demand being expected over the winter period. Therefore, the team would be able to offer this support to a further 10 families.

***Amount recommended by the Capital and Revenue Grant Panel £3,505***

### 6.3 North Hertfordshire Multiple Sclerosis Society

<b>Applicant Project</b>	<b>North Hertfordshire Multiple Sclerosis Society</b> Purchase of food for meals, cooking equipment, books and crafts, plus funds to cover rent.
<b>Sum requested</b>	<b>£3,835</b>
<b>Total project cost</b>	£3,835
<b>Match funding</b>	No confirmed income stream at the moment, but they may be able to raise small amounts from fundraising activity - pandemic dependent.
<b>Previous support</b>	£740 in 2018 Baldock Area Grant £740 in 2018 Royston Area Grant £1,500 in 2018 Hitchin Area Grant

**NHDC Policy met  
Council objectives**

£1,500 in 2018 Letchworth Area Grant  
Yes  
Be a more welcoming and inclusive Council  
Build thriving and resilient communities

The MS Society provide a local resource for people with Multiple Sclerosis, including a lunch club, exercise classes and social gatherings.

They would like to offer a combination of face-to-face and online sessions. The face-to-face sessions at Hadleigh in Letchworth would be a combination of physiotherapy professional-led exercise with a social element, which includes the provision of a hot nutritious meal. There are about 15 people from the local group who plan to attend these sessions. There would be between 3-8 people in attendance per session and there would be two to three sessions per week.

The society will need to retrain and revalidate people to provide the lunches and purchase suitable protection measures such as face masks, sanitising gel and PPE.

They are looking to supplement the face-to-face sessions with an outreach service of online sessions for those who might struggle to get to Hadleigh. Participants are from Baldock, Weston, Letchworth, Hitchin, Royston, and Stevenage areas. On average, around 80% of participants are from North Herts.

The blended service will reach a greater audience, especially those who do not cope well with online delivery. They are looking to reach about 48 members in total with this approach.

***Amount recommended by the Capital and Revenue Grant Panel: £3,835***

#### **6.4 The Bancroft Players Amateur Dramatic Society**

<b>Applicant</b>	<b>The Bancroft Players</b>
<b>Project</b>	Resources and alterations to make the Queen Mother Theatre safe for visitors due to the pandemic.
<b>Sum requested</b>	<b>£16,000</b>
<b>Total project cost</b>	£24,000
<b>Match funding</b>	£8,000 from donations and ticket sales
<b>Previous support</b>	£2000 in 2020 from the Community Support Fund
<b>NHDC Policy met</b>	Yes
<b>Council objectives</b>	Be a more welcoming and inclusive Council Build thriving and resilient communities

The Bancroft Players are the leading amateur dramatic group in North Hertfordshire, based at The Queen Mother Theatre, Hitchin. Their aims are to educate the public in the dramatic arts. They consider arts to have educative value and to compliment positive mental wellbeing, and they support equal opportunity, inclusion, and diversity within the local and surrounding communities. The theatre is one of two in the local region and the only not-for-profit Community Theatre of its type.

The Bancroft Players support four societies within the theatre and a number of other societies with the use of the theatre, technical support, front of house, refreshments and a bar for any productions they wish to promote and produce. The other groups who use the theatre include: Big Band; Ensemble; The Dance Academy; Big Spirit

Youth Theatre; Putteridgebury Gilbert and Sullivan Society; Hitchin Thespians; Market Theatre; Hitchin Film Club.

In the last 3 years, more than 4,000 people have attended the Queen Mother Theatre to see productions staged by The Bancroft Players. This does not include visitors for the productions or activities of other societies or people who use the venue.

Due to the pandemic, the theatre requires a number of safety measures and interior alterations that will allow it to continue to remain open and for The Bancroft Players to support the Societies within the membership as well as external societies. To ensure the wellbeing of members and others, they need to invest in:

- (i) UVC Air cleaning equipment for each of the operating areas: Foyer, Main Auditorium, Studio Theatre and Youth Wing.
- (ii) Additional cleaning and misting processes after every performance.
- (iii) PPE and sanitiser for all participants and guests to maintain necessary levels as a See It Safely Theatre.
- (iv) New software for the Box Office to allow a Front of House Manager to control ticketless access easily and safely.
- (v) Moving their Unlimited Charity Organisation to a CIO in order to provide an umbrella organisation to other societies that need a home and support from all aspects of theatre production and education
- (vi) An interior re-shape (no architectural change) of the foyer area to offer support to other community groups in a safe environment.

***Amount recommended by the Capital and Revenue Grant Panel: £16,000***

## 6.5 Groundworks Herts

<b>Applicant Project</b>	<b>Groundwork East</b> To provide a one-off 'garden clearance' service to elderly / vulnerable residents in North Herts who cannot afford a private gardening service or carry out the work required themselves.
<b>Sum requested</b>	<b>£4,000</b>
<b>Total project cost</b>	£4,000
<b>Match funding</b>	£0
<b>Previous support</b>	Last awarded funding in 2017: £2,968 from Letchworth Area Grant for supervised outdoor play sessions on Norton Common. 2013: £840 from Hitchin Area Grant for RISE Project
<b>NHDC Policy met</b>	Yes
<b>Council objectives</b>	Build thriving and resilient communities

Groundwork East are the community and environmental charity working across the East of England to create stronger, healthier communities, responsible business, and greater prospects for local people. They work with local communities, the public sector and partner organisations, and deliver a wide range of practical projects and services including new or improved parks, green spaces and gardens; community food growing and horticultural therapy for elderly, disabled or vulnerable people; volunteer-supported 'garden rescue service for elderly householders'; environmental education and accredited training for children or unemployed young people; and energy efficiency support for businesses and vulnerable households. Groundwork East operates across the East of England with operations in several counties and local authority areas. Groundwork Hertfordshire operates across Hertfordshire.

The funding will be used to provide a one-off 'garden clearance' service to elderly/vulnerable residents in North Herts. These residents will have gardens that have become overgrown/out of control and who are unable to clear the garden themselves, cannot afford a private gardening service and carry out the clearance required. The reasons for this could be due to hospital stays, bereavements, increased frailty, or other reasons related to the coronavirus pandemic including reduced activity, ill health, and social isolation.

The funding will allow Groundwork East to reach more gardens where existing funding restricts this, including gardens on a reserve list. It will also enable more time to be spent on recruiting volunteers from within the community whose involvement with conservation activities may be reduced over the past 19 months. Overall, this scheme will benefit ten residents in North Hertfordshire directly. The activity will take place between the award of funding and March 2022.

Referrals will be received through connected organisations such as Age UK, Herts Help, social prescribers, NHS community navigators and tenancy support officers. Reporting afterward is triaged through to Herts Help as need due to issues identified and results of the service.

Value for money can be demonstrated via reduced crime, fire risk and social issues involved with unkept gardens and through exit questionnaires with residents themselves which is a mandatory part of the service.

It is worth noting that an NHDC councillor sits on the advisory committee for this organisation.

**Amount recommended by the Capital and Revenue Grant Panel: £4,000**

## 6.6 NESSie IN ED CIC

<b>Applicant</b>	<b>NESSie IN ED CIC</b> (formerly known as North Herts Emotional Support in Schools)
<b>Project</b>	To provide mental health support to children and young people (0-25 yrs) and their families in educational settings and the community.
<b>Sum requested</b>	<b>£20,000</b>
<b>Total project cost</b>	£83,000
<b>Match funding</b>	£31,000 DSPL £22,000 Private Counselling £5,000 John Coates Charitable Trust £4,500 Brian Lesley Reicher
<b>Previous support</b>	£1,250 Royston Committee August 2020 and £5,000 Covid Support June 2020
<b>NHDC Policy met</b>	Yes
<b>Council objectives</b>	Be a more welcoming and inclusive Council Build thriving and resilient communities

Covid 19 has had a devastating effect on children and young people's mental health and the recently published tenth annual Good Childhood Report by The Children's Society, finds "almost 7% of 10 to 15 years olds in the UK report they are unhappy". This marks a significant decline in children's happiness over the decade. In line with this and other data, in 2020-2021 NESSie saw 623 children and young people for mental health support which was an increase of over 50% from 2019 – 2020.

They also had an increase of referrals with neurodiversity by 16.6%; Anxiety by 7.1%; behavioural and mental health by 2.7%; low mood by 2.0% and significantly 13% of their referrals were in crisis and suicidal. NESSie provides not only counselling and

arts therapy support to children and young people but also training and counselling to families and professionals in education to ensure lasting change.

They had 86.4% positive outcomes from their support last year which is significant in early intervention and prevention. They would like to continue this support by funding a therapist an extra day per week for a year; build on their digital infrastructure to ensure effective digital referrals and risk management and increase admin support to meet this local need.

Evidence has shown that without support, mental health difficulties have been shown to be predictors of poor life outcomes including difficulties in relationships, and reduced life expectancy due to physical illness or suicide and that most young people wait on average over 10 years before accessing help. Each child's treatment costs approximately £600 which is considerable value for money when considering the cost of carrying the mental health difficulty into adulthood.

**Amount recommended by the Capital and Revenue Grant Panel: £ 20,000**

## 6.7 Imajica Theatre Company CIC

<b>Applicant Project</b>	<b>Imajica Theatre Company CIC</b> Youth engagement utilising videos and social media tools.
<b>Sum requested</b>	£9,500
<b>Total project cost</b>	£9,500
<b>Match funding</b>	Imajica Theatre will provide in kind support the use of their digital creation package.
<b>Previous support</b>	£2,000 Letchworth 23/9/20 £1,523 District-wide 17/6/20 £1,450 Letchworth Area Grant 23/10/19 £600 Letchworth Area Grant 10/12/15
<b>NHDC Policy met Council objectives</b>	Yes Be a more welcoming and inclusive Council Build thriving and resilient communities

Imajica Theatre are based in Letchworth Garden City and are a touring theatre group who work in the local community and throughout the UK. During lockdown, the company were successful in adapting two projects to working digitally and have continued to adapt while their industry navigates the COVID-19 pandemic, building on their digital skills to be able to widen their demographic and reach wider audiences.

Imajica have applied for funding to coordinate a project for young people, helping them create a selection of short music videos about issues (locally and nationally) that concern them. Working directly in the community, Imajica aim to reach out to young people where they live and give them a new approach to connecting with other people.

Participants will be involved in all parts of the process and, by hosting a showcase at the end of the project, they can share their experiences with others to inspire and celebrate their successes with friends, family, and the community.

Alongside giving young people a voice, the project will provide participants with an opportunity to gain important life skills, build friendships, develop cultural capital, and focus on positive health and wellbeing.

The grant would benefit approximately 60 young people aged 11-17, 30 in Letchworth and 30 in Hitchin, in areas with higher-than-average deprivation.



**Amount recommended by the Capital and Revenue Grant Panel: £9,500**

**6.8 Homestart Royston**

<b>Applicant</b>	<b>Home-Start Royston, Buntingford and South Cambridgeshire</b>
<b>Project</b>	Funding support to assist with annual rent costs for the group's office in Meldreth.
<b>Sum requested</b>	<b>£4,500</b>
<b>Total project cost</b>	£9,000
<b>Match funding</b>	£4,500 from fundraising activities
<b>Previous support</b>	In the last five years the group have received £1,050 from the Royston & District Committee (July 2019), £1,885 from the Covid Support Fund (June 2020) and £1,221 from the Royston & District Committee (October 2021).
<b>NHDC Policy met</b>	Yes
<b>Council objectives</b>	Be a more welcoming and inclusive Council Build thriving and resilient communities

Home-Start Royston, Buntingford and South Cambridgeshire is a registered charity that provides a key service for families with children aged nine and under. The organisation has been supporting families in the area for the last 38 years aiming to prevent them from slipping into crisis. Like most organisations it has been a struggle for the group to raise funds due to the ongoing Pandemic which has limited fundraising opportunities. Like other groups Home-Start Royston had to adapt working approaches during the Pandemic, with additional costs involved for technology including laptops, new phone systems and Zoom software. Home-Start Royston, Buntingford and South Cambridgeshire is made up of 12 Volunteer Committee Members, six part-time paid staff and 51 volunteers.

The main activities of Home-Start are the volunteer-led Home-Visiting Service and two specialist family support groups in Royston and Buntingford. Most families are supported by the Home-Visiting Service, whilst those who are socially isolated and excluded are invited to join a Family Support Group.

Each home-visited family is supported by a highly trained volunteer, who provides weekly compassionate, practical, and emotional support, which is non-judgemental, confidential and free. The support is tailored to meet each individual family's specific needs.

The Family Group(s) meet weekly during term-time - each session providing parents and children with structured activities, designed to enable them to successfully integrate into the local community and establish friendships and a peer-support network.

Home-Start monitoring, and evaluation reports show that over the last 3 years on average 93% of family needs have been met or partially met as a result of their support.

Below are a few quotes from families that have received support from Home-Start:  
*Home-Visited Family: "Because of our volunteer, I feel much less isolated, I feel able to talk to someone I trust implicitly, and I value her judgement... she is a stabilising force and has helped us ride the storms."*

*Family Group Participant: "It has been invaluable in our darkest time and through to the other side. My daughter has lovely friends and I have made some good connections along the way. The activities are both educational and nurturing and amazingly thought out."*

The funding requested is to cover rent costs for the main office in Meldreth. The group has secured £4,500 from own funds and the £4,500 requested from the Health Protection Board will cover the rent costs for the quarters starting in Jan 2022 and April 2022.

**Amount recommended by the Capital and Revenue Grant Panel: £4,500**

## 6.9 Tilehouse Counselling

<b>Applicant Project</b>	<b>Tilehouse Counselling</b> Sixteen more counselling sessions a week for teenagers.
<b>Sum requested</b>	<b>£8,192</b>
<b>Total project cost</b>	£16,640
<b>Match funding</b>	£1,880 individual donations £900 PayPal Giving £5,668 contribution from charitable activities.
<b>Previous Support</b>	£1280 split between Hitchin and Letchworth Committees in April 2020.
<b>NHDC Policy met</b>	Yes
<b>Council objectives</b>	Be a more welcoming and inclusive Council Build thriving and resilient communities

Tilehouse Counselling would like to spend funding on additional counselling sessions for teenagers. Due to Covid-19, the demand for their service has vastly increased and they have, reluctantly, had to close their waiting list. The funding would mean they could re-open the list.

They would like to recruit an additional counsellor with specific training in working with young people. With an additional counsellor they would be able to provide 16 extra counselling sessions each week specifically for teenagers.

They would like to ask NHDC to cover the cost of paying counsellors to see 16 additional teenagers weekly, at a rate of £32.00 per session. This represents good value for money as the work is largely preventative. They aim to provide counselling support before mental health issues develop into enduring mental health illnesses.

Tilehouse Counselling can demonstrate their effectiveness in this respect through both qualitative and quantitative measures. They use CORE (Clinical Outcomes in routine evaluation), counsellors' initial and ongoing assessment, and perhaps most importantly, feedback from the teenagers that use their service. They receive excellent feedback from teenagers, some say they would not still be here if they had not had their counselling.

The benefits will include stopping self-harming (around 70% of teenagers are harming themselves when they start their counselling with them), improvements in self-confidence and self-worth, re-engagement with school, improved relationships within and outside the family, reduced social isolation, working through gender identity issues and reductions in drug and alcohol abuse.

**Amount recommended by the Capital and Revenue Grant Panel: £8,192**

## 6.10 Create Community Network CIC

<b>Applicant Project</b>	<b>Create Community Network CIC</b> Providing half day sessions to support those whose employment has been impacted by the pandemic. Money will be spent on overheads, staffing costs including management, administration, session facilitation, marketing, and outreach; as well as expenses and refreshments, activities, and laptops.
<b>Sum requested</b>	<b>£12,280</b>
<b>Total project cost</b>	£15,780
<b>Match funding</b>	£1,500 fundraising. £2,000 contribution from Letchworth Heritage Foundation.
<b>Previous support</b>	N/A
<b>NHDC Policy met</b>	Yes
<b>Council objectives</b>	Be a more welcoming and inclusive Council Build thriving and resilient communities

Create Community support the long term socially disengaged and those that are unemployed living within Letchworth and North Herts. The three key areas covered by the organisation are Health & Wellbeing, Moving Toward Employment and Living in a Digital Age. A fourth area is soon to be introduced around Nature for Wellbeing. The provision within these areas comprises of short programmes and courses, engagement activities (mindfulness, ceramics, music, and art) and 1:1 mentoring. The 'Hub' is based at 19 Station Road in Letchworth and offers a communal space, a classroom and small meeting rooms for 1:1 sessions. The aim is to provide a friendly, non-judgemental environment where people can go for support, nourishment, and growth.

These funds will be spent on providing 'drop-in' support for those who have been impacted by the pandemic. This will enable the organisation to offer individuals space, time and support, as well as the opportunity to offload, pause and explore options for next steps. Job searching support, such as CV support and signposting for further in-house or external provision, will also be made available. Short and bite-size activities will be developed and run to support mindset and decision making, and individuals will have access to experienced volunteer support as well as access to laptops and the internet.

The provision of this kind of flexible support is much needed and cost effective. The aim is to support upwards of 150 individuals, providing them with a solid platform on which to take balanced and measured steps toward a sustainable future (not just employment).

There is added value in this initiative which comes from:

- The location in the heart of the community in the town centre, close to the Job Centre Plus (JCP), close to railway and bus networks.
- The existing provision and network that can signpost individuals to 'next step' opportunities, internally and externally.
- Support of volunteers who can sustain the initiative both in terms of administrative/operational help but also insight from their own experience and learning.

This initiative is aimed at anyone who has been adversely impacted by the pandemic, whether mentally (anxiety, stress, loneliness) or from an employment perspective (furlough or redundancy). The initiative will be targeting anyone from Letchworth or the North Herts region, with a concerted effort to ensure residents from local BAME communities are also very much included.

Typically, the activities attract most participants from Letchworth and local communities, but also have participants regularly coming from Stevenage, Hitchin, Ickleford, Baldock and some from Royston. The activity will take place at the Hub in Letchworth, which is just across the road from the Station and the Job Centre.

Currently the project is funded to open 1.5 days a week. The adaptations that will be made will allow a much-needed extra day and therefore will increase the amount of service users that can be accommodated.

The space has been leased from Letchworth Heritage Foundation and £30,000 is paid per annum to cover rent and services. This does not include staffing and other running costs such as activity development and equipment.

***Amount recommended by the Capital and Revenue Grant Panel £12,280***

### 6.11 Baldock Arts and Heritage Centre

<b>Applicant</b>	<b>Baldock Arts and Heritage Centre (BAHC)</b> (Baldock Town Hall Limited)
<b>Project</b>	To run a monthly film night as before the pandemic with social distancing and improved viewing experience. Money will be spent on sound and projector equipment and film licenses.
<b>Sum requested</b>	<b>£4,078.51</b>
<b>Total project cost</b>	£4,678.51
<b>Match funding</b>	£600 BAHC Reserves (will cover the cost of the film licenses.)
<b>Previous support</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>NHDC Policy met</b>	Yes
<b>Council objectives</b>	<b>Be a more welcoming and inclusive Council</b> <b>Build thriving and resilient communities</b>

Baldock Arts and Heritage Centre (BAHC) is a volunteer-run organisation that took over the lease of the Old Town Hall in 2013 and was granted charity status in 2014. The main aims of the charity are:

- To maintain the Old Town Hall as an Arts and Heritage Centre for the benefit of the local community
- To encourage wider public participation in the arts
- To promote interest in local history

Since 2013 BAHC has hosted both professional and amateur drama, music festivals, book events, history talks, film nights and family shows. The downstairs Gallery has featured over 30 local and community artists. Baldock Museum is now an integral part of the building and BAHC activities.

Before the pandemic BAHC started to run a monthly Film Night. Film Nights take place each month in the main hall at BAHC, the Old Town Hall, Baldock. BAHC now wish to enhance this activity by improving the equipment to make it easier for volunteers to operate the system, to allow the audience to be more socially distanced from each other, as well as improving the viewing experience. Admission charge is £5 and BAHC have been able to cover the running and licence costs and expect to be able to continue to do so.

The venue is in Baldock but as BAHC have an open-door policy, the audience isn't limited to local residents. The aim is to provide a social event around the film showing, helping to foster community wellbeing.

Following the pandemic, the number of BAHC volunteers has fallen. As this project is entirely run by volunteers, the intention is to simplify the film night operations to enable it to continue with the available volunteers. With an improved and easier-to-use system, the hope is to attract more volunteers and increase the number and type of film showings. Obtaining this grant will potentially allow BAHC to be able to run more events, increasing the diversity of films and audience.

At present, the equipment used is difficult to setup because it wasn't designed for the purpose it is used for and gives a less than optimal show, the audio quality isn't good, the dialogue is difficult to hear, and the screen isn't large. BAHC wish to purchase dedicated equipment which can be permanently configured and provide overall better quality to viewers.

Since BAHC's original application for £5,000 they have been donated some equipment so the amount they are applying for has decreased.

**Amount recommended by the Capital and Revenue Grant Panel: £4,078.51**

## 6.12 Benslow Music Trust

<b>Applicant Project</b>	<b>Benslow Music Trust</b> Live streamed concerts and offering online and residential music courses. Necessary PPE and a technician for live-streamed concerts are required to facilitate these.
<b>Sum requested</b>	<b>£1,850</b>
<b>Total project cost</b>	£12,661
<b>Match funding</b>	£10,811 – Cleaning costs will be covered by Benslow Music
<b>Previous support</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>NHDC Policy met</b>	Yes
<b>Council objectives</b>	<b>Build thriving and resilient communities</b>

Like many organisations, the pandemic had a significant impact on Benslow Music's activities. At the beginning of the pandemic the building had to close, and all activity was halted. This included ceasing all concerts and courses, putting staff on furlough and in some cases, making staff redundant. This also resulted in a significant impact on income. In 2020, the Benslow Music had budgeted to raise £950,000 from their music courses but only achieved £488,000.

As restrictions eased, the organisation adapted and began live streaming concerts with reduced live audience capacity, offered innovative online courses, changed the format of those coming for residential courses and overhauled cleaning and hygiene protocols. Concerts are free for that aged under-27 and have been particularly welcomed by those unable to attend live performances because of COVID. Adaptions being made include:

- Offering safe meals to residential course attendees by providing table service rather than a buffet
- Operating live streamed concerts so that audiences can enjoy high quality, live music from the comfort of their own homes
- Providing necessary PPE
- Continuing with enhanced cleaning

- Maintaining pre-Covid course prices to continue attracting participants (these are usually increased on an annual basis)

These adaptations incurred significant costs which included hiring additional staff to provide table service for residential course attendees, purchasing equipment for live-streaming (this cost £4,000 and was to mitigate the impact of the 50% reduced audience capacity) and purchasing necessary PPE: gloves, masks, hand sanitiser etc. Money was also spent on training new staff members as well as longer-standing colleagues who needed training in the new activities. There has also been loss of income from the courses, external hires, and concerts. In 2019 concerts generated £27,800, in 2020 it was £18,000 and this year is projected to generate £23,000.

Funding has been requested to assist providing PPE and sanitisation as well as hiring a freelance technician for live-streamed concerts.

Receiving this funding will help to continue to provide a unique and much-valued service to the local community. Benslow music strive to be a sanctuary and place of respite, joy, energy and wellbeing to audiences and concert participants.

The beneficiaries of this grant will be users of Benslow Music: course attendees, concert goers and those who perhaps no longer attend courses or concerts but are still very supportive of the work. The courses are residential and attract attendees from all over the country (as well as many local residents). The same applies to concert goers, who can and do come from further afield. This benefits the town and its businesses. Many of the staff live locally too. Between May–July 2021, 25% of concert attendees were from within the district of North Herts. Between 2018 – 2020, 364 of course participants came from North Hertfordshire. This made up about 3.3% of all of Benslow Music’s participants. Overall, 10.3% of course participants were from Hertfordshire.

Benslow Music’s conversations with audiences and collection of feedback has indicated that attending Benslow Music is a positive and beneficial experience which provides a social aspect and challenges individuals to learn something new or improve existing skills.

***Amount recommended by the Capital and Revenue Grant Panel: £1,850***

### 6.13 Herts Disability Sports Foundation (HDSF)

<b>Applicant Project</b>	<b>Herts Disability Sports Foundation (HDSF)</b> Providing Learn to Ride training to 100 primary school aged children from disadvantaged areas of North Herts that have been identified as being unable to cycle without stabilisers. This would include providing a suitable bike to those that do not already own one and a helmet to each attendee.
<b>Sum requested</b>	<b>£7,670</b>
<b>Total project cost</b>	£8,470
<b>Match funding</b>	£800 HDSF Reserves
<b>Previous support</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>NHDC Policy met</b>	Yes
<b>Council objectives</b>	<b>Be a more welcoming and inclusive Council</b> <b>Build thriving and resilient communities</b>

Herts Disability Sports Foundation’s (HDSF) mission is to develop disability sport across Hertfordshire. HDSF provide activities for anyone with a learning or physical disability, whatever their age or ability. HDSF operate across Hertfordshire and have a small office base at Knights Templar School in Baldock. The foundation provides open sessions, holiday activities, cycle training, clubs for young people, teambuilding

events and Paralympic roadshows. Activities are provided by qualified instructors and coaches, of which the majority are themselves disabled. Five instructors have competed in parasports at international level.

On the first day of lockdown, HDSF converted all activities to online to keep everyone active and connected. The online fitness and dance sessions, social discos and bingo were attended by 624 people between April 2020 and April 2021. A blend of face-to-face small group activities and online social sessions are now being provided to ensure that all participants can continue to access the service.

The financial impact of the pandemic has been significant for HDSF. Income from activities fell by 62%, whilst salary costs increased by 23%. However, some successful online funding events secured grant income of £143,000. Whilst this means that the foundation doesn't require funds to support core costs, there is not sufficient unrestricted reserves to enable the running of projects like this. Therefore, additional income is needed to cover project costs.

Following a successful pilot at Bedwell school in Stevenage in April, grant money would be spent on a project to get 100 primary school aged children cycling. HDSF will provide Learn to Ride training to pupils, that have been identified as being unable to cycle without the use of stabilisers, from five primary schools in some of North Herts' most deprived areas. Those who don't have their own bike will receive a reconditioned bike. For those who own a bike, HDSF's qualified bike mechanics will service bikes which are not currently roadworthy, or if the bike is not appropriate for their needs (too heavy or wrong size) a more suitable, reconditioned bike will be provided. Bikes will be acquired through Herts County Council Re-use Centre, Waste Savers and through bike donation schemes at each of the schools involved in the project. All participants will also take home a new helmet. Through re-conditioning and re-using bikes which have been donated or thrown away, costs can be kept as low as possible to ensure the project provides value for money.

During the first 1.5-hour session, pupils will use specialist lightweight bikes, which help children to balance and progress quickly. The second session is a refresh and bike fitting. Bikes are set up to meet the needs of each child, who then leave the session with their donated bike and a new helmet. Additional 1:1 training will be provided for those with SEND if necessary. After the project, bikeability training will be scheduled in coordination with the Hertfordshire County Council Cycle Training Team to help children progress further.

During the pandemic, many children have become lonely and isolated. With sport and fitness opportunities available through school and local leisure providers reduced during the restrictions, many have become less active, resulting in significant weight gain for some. For those who can ride a bike, cycling has provided many children and parents with the opportunity to exercise and have fun as a family at no cost. Children who can't cycle have been disadvantaged. They may be unable to ride because:

- The availability of cycle training since the start of the pandemic has been very poor due to school closures. When schools were open, the focus was on helping children to catch up academically when they have been at school.
- Many families are facing financial hardship as a result of the pandemic and are unable to afford to purchase bikes.
- Many children with SEND need additional help to gain confidence and skills.
- Many children struggle to learn to cycle because they are using an inappropriate bike – for example, the frame is too large or too heavy.
- Some parents may not have the skills or feel confident to teach their child to ride – particularly if the child has additional needs.
- Children have a bike which requires repairs.

The ability to cycle is a key life skill, providing opportunities to exercise, have fun and socialise outdoors and leading to improved mental and physical health. Children who

don't have this skill, or appropriate equipment are severely disadvantaged, particularly as they progress towards secondary school.

**Amount recommended by the Capital and Revenue Grant Panel: £7,670**

#### 6.14 Phase

<b>Applicant Project</b>	<b>Phase</b> The money will be used to recruit two more volunteer mentors to provide more mentoring for young people at the three Hitchin secondary schools. This is to meet increased need for support.
<b>Sum requested</b>	<b>£2,819</b>
<b>Total project cost</b>	£5,765.25
<b>Match funding</b>	£1,446.25 from Phase fundraising drive 'Hitchin Home Olympics) £500 from Magic Little Grants £1,000 from the Howard Foundation
<b>Previous support</b>	£4,916 between 2012 and 2014 from Hitchin Area Grant for the RISE project (broken down into seven individual payments) £1,500 in 2015 from Hitchin Area Grant for support groups for self-harming young people £1,925 in 2020 from Hitchin Area Grant for virtual mentoring sessions for young people
<b>NHDC Policy met</b>	Yes
<b>Council objectives</b>	Be a more welcoming and inclusive Council Build thriving and resilient communities

Phase (Providing Help and Support in Education) work alongside young people in Hitchin to promote their wellbeing and resilience. They reach young people through schools and increasingly through other channels like social media and online resources. Their resources cover resilience, emotional and physical wellbeing, dealing with stress and uncertainty, and planning for the future. Virtual mentoring is also provided.

They will use the funding to provide more mentoring for young people by recruiting two more volunteer mentors. They currently provide the mentoring service to pupils in the three secondary schools in Hitchin: The Priory School, Hitchin Boys' School and Hitchin Girls' School.

Mentoring is a way of supporting a young person who is struggling with emotions, wellbeing, anxiety, or stress. It helps them set goals, try out strategies for handling emotions, and feel more in control of what's happening around them. Phase offers mentoring in half hour meetings in six-week blocks, which we know is long enough to establish new habits and coping strategies. Young people can opt to continue with further blocks if they and the mentor agree it would be useful.

Demand for mentoring has increased as a result of the pandemic. School closures, exam uncertainty, unpredictability of access to teachers and support staff, bubble closures as well as enforced changes to socialising and peer to peer contact have caused disruption and been a huge source of concern for many students. Phase have found that even after schools opened fully in March 2021 pastoral care teams reported high levels of anxiety about schoolwork, family, and friendships. In the Summer 2021 term alone they received 60 referrals from schools, an increase around 50% on usual numbers. They are currently running a waiting list.



They would like to increase their capacity to meet this demand by recruiting two more volunteers as well as redirecting existing staff time into this valuable intervention.

***Amount recommended by the Capital and Revenue Grant Panel: £2,819***

## **7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 Chapter 1, s1-8 of the Localism Act 2011 provides a General Power of Competence which gives local authorities the powers to do anything if it is not specifically prohibited in legislation.
- 7.2 Section 137 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.
- 7.3 The decision taker signing the Decision Notice has delegated authority to take such a decision in accordance with the North Hertfordshire District Council Constitution under section 14.6.8(b)(iii)(A) in relation to Community engagement and development, including financial assistance and grants to external organisations.

## **8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 The current balance available in the budget to allocate is **£200,000** funding provided from the Health Protection Board.
- 8.2 The total amount of funding requested adds up to **£105,425**
- 8.3 The decision to agree this level of funding as outlined will leave an amount of **£94,575** to utilise by the end of the financial year in March 2023.

## **9. RISK IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 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.

## **10. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1 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.
- 10.2 Grant 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.

## **11. SOCIAL VALUE IMPLICATIONS**

- 11.1 The Social Value Act and "go local" requirements do not apply to this report.

## **12. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

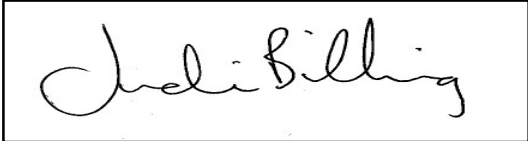
12.1. There are no known Environmental impacts or requirements that apply to this report.

**15. HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

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

**NOTIFICATION DATE**

17 December



**Signature of Executive Member Decision taker .....**

**Date ...28 January 2022**

**Signature of Service Director: Legal and Community**



**Please Note: that *unless urgency provisions apply* EXECUTIVE decisions cannot be implemented until 5 clear working days have elapsed after the decision has been taken to allow for scrutiny call-in.**

**Call-in does not apply to NON-EXECUTIVE DECISIONS**