



Stronger Communities

Assessment Reports

Joslin, Jack

CENTRAL GRANTS PROGRAMME

ASSESSMENT CATEGORY – Stronger Communities

Afro-Brazilian Arts & Cultural Exchange Institute
(Ref: 15155)

Amount requested: £4,900

Amount recommended: £4,900

Purpose of grant request: Social inclusion project for children and young people living in City of London Housing Estates in Southwark.

The Applicant

The Afro-Brazilian Arts & Cultural Exchange Institute (ABACEI) is a charity based in Southwark, its objects are to promote the use Capoeira and Afro-Brazilian Arts to improve the lives of members of the community. The charity offers a range of programmes from its headquarters in Elephant and Castle that engage people to learn music, dance, martial arts and performing arts. The Charity has been operating in Southwark since 2012.

Background and detail of proposal

Funding is being sought to deliver a 35-week project specifically targeting residents of the City of London Housing estates in Southwark. The project will deliver twice a week with sessions for separate age groups with additional sessions put on over the summer. The programme will work with young people between 4 and 18, separating the age groups appropriately. Young people will be introduced to Capoeira and other Afro-Brazilian Arts. The project looks to specifically target residents of City of London Housing estates in Southwark and has already delivered taster sessions at several locations near to the estates. Much of the focus will be on the Avondale Square estate on Old Kent Road. If funding is awarded the charity will do some more specific marketing and attend tenants' meetings to get the word out about the project. All the sessions will take place at ABACEI's premises in Elephant and Castle.

Funding will cover the delivery costs of the sessions, instruments, venue hire and marketing. The total cost of the project is £9,900 and the Charity have already raised £5,000. They are therefore seeking a £4,900 contribution to the overall costs.

Financial Information

ABACEI have a modest turnover with most of its income coming from grants and community fundraising. They hold a low level of reserves but are run and managed by volunteers, only employing sessional staff to deliver projects.

Year end as at 31 December	2017	2018	2019
	Accounts	Accounts	Budget
	£	£	£
Income & expenditure:			
Income	20,089	23,050	20,089
- % of Income confirmed as at 03/12/2018		100%	77%
Expenditure	(18,900)	(21,900)	(18,900)
Total surplus/(deficit)	1,189	1,150	1,189
Split between:			
- Restricted surplus/(deficit)	0	0	0
- Unrestricted surplus/(deficit)	1,189	1,150	1,189
	1,189	1,150	1,189
Cost of Raising Funds	0	0	0
- % of income	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Total expenditure	18,900	21,900	18,900
Free unrestricted reserves:			
Free unrestricted reserves held at year end	1,189	2,339	3,528
No of months of operating expenditure	0.8	1.3	2.2

Recommendation

This application is looking to provide opportunities for young people from City of London Housing estates in Southwark to engage in Capoeira and other Afro-Brazilian Arts. At assessment it was clear that this was a very well managed grass roots community group who have been working in the Elephant and Castle Area for some time. The activity of this work meets the criteria of the Stronger Communities Programme, however it would be necessary to ensure that this work is targeted specifically at residents of City of London Housing Estates. At assessment it was clear that the charity would be targeting Col Housing estate residents and had already done some outreach work. The project will run additionally to the charity's other open access sessions. If officers are supportive of this proposal, I would suggest that funding is made conditional on ABACEI working with estate officers on approving outreach plans to ensure this work will target young people living in Col Housing estates.

£4,900 toward the running costs of a 35-week programme introducing young people for City of London Housing Estates in Southwark to Capoeira and other Afro-Brazilian Arts.

CENTRAL GRANTS PROGRAMME

ASSESSMENT CATEGORY – Stronger Communities

Age Concern City of London (Ref: 15145)

Amount requested: £9,919

Amount recommended: £9,920

Purpose of grant request: To continue to develop a community outreach programme, regular meetings with older Bengali women that reside in the Mansell Street estate and surrounding areas.

The Applicant

Age Concern City of London (ACCL) is an independent Charity that is linked to Age Concern London who have 'deemed' control as they share 3 out of 5 directors. ACCL is a separate company, limited by guarantee that produces separate company accounts and has its own bank account. Both Charities are linked on the Charity Commission website and therefore come under the same Charity number.

Background and detail of proposal

Over the last 2 years ACCL have been building and developing relationships with older women from the Bengali community on the Mansell Street estate. Initially funded by the Stronger Communities Programme the project employed a bi-lingual outreach worker to work two days a month. The worker has been working with older women in the Bengali community to establish volunteering opportunities around setting up the Mansell Street Women's Group. The project promotes healthy lifestyles within the community and provides access to ESOL classes, trips to local libraries, and a range of volunteering opportunities to develop and encourage active citizenship.

Funding is being sought to continue to deliver this project and expand elements of it. In the last 12 months a community garden has been established on the estate and the group would like to develop the garden and have been working collaboratively with Spitalfields City Farm. Additional aspects of the programme would be to organise swimming trips, provide Internet access tutorials while continuing to deliver the core elements of the work.

Financial Information

Most of the Charity's income comes from commissioned contracts and grants. Substantial income comes from two projects that come to an end in March 2019 which ACCL acted as the contract manager, working with other delivery partners. The City of London have re-commissioned this work and ACCL have decided not to bid for the work which will significantly reduce turnover in 2020 as outlined in the table below. This will have a minimal impact on the Charity as they acted as contract manager, sub-contracting most of the work to other providers. In 2020 the ACCL will focus on delivering its core work. This decrease in revenue will leave the Charity with high reserves by the end of 2020 and they will be required to re-consider how to utilise these reserves.

Year end as at 31 March	2018	2019	2020
	Examined Accounts	Budget	Forecast
	£	£	£
Income & expenditure:			
Income	221,856	164,341	50,000
- % of Income confirmed as at 23/01/2019	n/a	95%	40%
Expenditure	(225,734)	(157,640)	(50,000)
Total surplus/(deficit)	(3,878)	6,701	0
Split between:			
- Restricted surplus/(deficit)	0	60	0
- Unrestricted surplus/(deficit)	(3,878)	6,641	0
	(3,878)	6,701	0
Cost of Raising Funds	0	2,000	2,000
- % of income	0.0%	1.2%	4.0%
Operating expenditure (unrestricted funds)	7,938	9,141	10,000
Free unrestricted reserves:			
Free unrestricted reserves held at year end	9,653	16,294	16,294
No of months of operating expenditure	14.6	21.4	19.6
Reserves policy target	1,985	2,285	2,500
No of months of operating expenditure	3.0	3.0	3.0
Free reserves over/(under) target	7,669	14,009	13,794

Recommendation

Age Concern City of London provide services to Older people in the City of London. They are majority funded by the City of London for a variety of programmes and are administratively joined to Age UK London. This project is a continuation of work that has already been supported under this programme and is looking to build and develop over the next 12 months. ACCL will be required to provide appropriate monitoring information on the existing project before any additional funding can be released.

This project fits with the programme outcomes as it will promote health and wellbeing outcomes for older Bengali women while also finding avenues for them to engage in the development of community activities through volunteering. Funding is therefore recommended as follows:

£9,920 over a 12-month period to continue to deliver a community outreach programme, regular meetings and support the delivery of the Mansell Street Women's Group working with older Bengali women that reside in the Mansell Street estate and surrounding areas.

CENTRAL GRANTS PROGRAMME

ASSESSMENT CATEGORY – Stronger Communities

Aldgate Community Events (Ref: 15146)

Amount requested: £10,000

Amount recommended: £10,000

Purpose of grant request: To support the costs of organising and hosting a day's festival celebrating Boishakhi Mela in the City on Aldgate Square on 14 April 2019.

The Applicant

Aldgate Community Events (ACE) formed in October 2014 as a Constituted Voluntary Organisation and recently registered as a Community Interest Company. The purpose of ACE is to bring people in Aldgate and the surrounding area together, combat social isolation and promote unity, friendship and a strong sense of community through organising arts, culture and learning activities, as well as information exchange between all groups connected to, and by, the Aldgate area. Run primarily by volunteers that are passionate about their community ACE produces events to celebrate the past, present and future of the Aldgate area and the people who live work and play there.

Background and detail of proposal

Boishakhi in the City will be a historic event hosting the first Bengali New Year celebration in the City of London, in April 2019. This will take place in Aldgate Square, Portsoken ward, where there is a large Bengali population in the community. ACE are seeking funding to deliver the event, in partnership with Positive Action Through Creativity (PAC). The project will work with and engage residents from across the community celebrating Bengali New Year.

The event will seek internationally renowned acts to perform at the celebration as well as engaging residents and businesses in the community. The festival will take place over the course of a day with market style stalls selling street food and clothing. A parade is planned but is dependent on space and whether the appropriate road closures are agreed. Later in the day there will be music, dance and speeches that will take place on a stage at the North of the square. It is anticipated that the event will last until 9pm. Your funding is being sought to contribute to the total cost of the set up for the festival which includes staging, sound equipment and other essential items to deliver a successful event. Any shortfall in the budget is expected to be raised from local businesses.

Financial Information

The organisation has been dormant for several years as they save for the major project in 2018. In December 2016, they received a grant from the City of London (Community Development) of £30,000 to seed fund the community play and work of the artistic director. As the table outlines below much of the organisation's activity will begin in the financial year ending December 2018, including the previous grant awarded by this committee. Now the organisation is registered as a Community Interest Company they have confirmed training will take place for the Directors and Treasurer.

Year end as at 31 December	2018 Accounts £	2019 Draft £	2020 Budget £
Income & expenditure:			
Income	47,584	98,626	45,332
- % of Income confirmed as at 07/02/2019		47%	0%
Expenditure	(42,987)	(86,294)	(39,750)
Total surplus/(deficit)	4,597	12,332	5,582
Split between:			
- Restricted surplus/(deficit)	0	6,200	(15,000)
- Unrestricted surplus/(deficit)	4,597	6,132	20,582
	4,597	12,332	5,582
Cost of Raising Funds	0	0	0
- % of income	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Total expenditure	42,987	86,294	39,750
Free unrestricted reserves:			
Free unrestricted reserves held at year end	4,597	10,729	31,311
No of months of operating expenditure	1.3	1.5	9.5

Recommendation

ACE have run and delivered two successful projects over the last year and a half with support from the Stronger Communities Programme. They have experience delivering events in the Aldgate Area and involve the community and businesses in the planning and delivery of their programmes.

During the assessment process ACE were not given permission to host this event in Aldgate Square. The event has now been moved to the Guildhall Yard and permission granted. This will of course change the event and there was concern about whether it would still be accessible to the community. Your officer has had reassurance on this point. The Mela is also fundraising through Spacehive to ensure the project is viable. In order to safeguard the grant it is recommended that funding is conditional on the balance for the project being raised, this will mitigate against any risk. Funding is therefore recommended as follows:

£10,000 contribution towards the event costs associated with hosting the Boishakhi Mela in the Guildhall Yard on 14 April 2019. Funding is conditional on the balance for the project being confirmed.

CENTRAL GRANTS PROGRAMME

ASSESSMENT CATEGORY – STRONGER COMMUNITIES

Chance UK (ref. 15154)

Amount requested: £10,000

Amount recommended: £10,000

Purpose of grant request:

To provide specialist mentoring to children with severe emotional and behavioural needs, living on City of London housing estates in Southwark.

The Applicant

Chance UK is a registered charity and specialist mentoring organisation. Focusing on early intervention, it supports children who exhibit challenging behaviour and emotional difficulties by providing positive and nurturing role models. Children develop resilience and confidence that improve their behaviour and emotional wellbeing in the short term, and better equip them to face life's challenges in the long-term. The charity works across several London boroughs and has social franchises in Liverpool and Wales. The City Bridge Trust currently part-funds their mentoring and parenting support programme in Lambeth.

Background and detail of proposal

Chance UK request funding towards a solution focused mentoring programme in Southwark for children aged 5 – 12 who are excluded from school or at risk of exclusion due to a range of severe emotional and behavioural problems. Following Chance UK's tried and tested model, volunteer mentors are drawn from the local community and intensively trained to provide one-to-one support to these children. This project will work across Southwark; Stronger Communities funding is requested to provide places on the programme for two children who live on City of London managed estates in the borough.

In the short-term Chance UK's work has shown an 88% reduction in children's behavioural and emotional difficulties. In the longer term, the organisation believes that by intervening early they can prevent later poor outcomes for the children they work with, including anti-social behaviour, gang activity and involvement in the criminal justice system.

Financial Information

The charity incurred a deficit in 2017/18 due to the ending of two large funded projects while expenditure on continuing staff costs remained steady. However, in response it has restructured to consolidate resources and is placing a stronger focus on income generation; it has met its income target three months before the 18/19 year and will start 2019/20 with 85% of target income confirmed. Free reserves are recovering steadily. The reserves policy is based on total rather than operating expenditure; this is reflected in the table below.

Year end as at 31 March	2018	2019	2020
	Independently Examined Accounts	Forecast/Draft	Budget
	£	£	£
Income & expenditure:			
Income	836,514	894,084	948,298
- % of Income confirmed as at 11/01/2019	N/A	100%	85%
Expenditure	(933,709)	(868,524)	(931,058)
Total surplus/(deficit)	(97,195)	25,560	17,240
Split between:			
- Restricted surplus/(deficit)	(3,382)	5,560	(55,747)
- Unrestricted surplus/(deficit)	(93,813)	20,000	72,987
	(97,195)	25,560	17,240
Cost of Raising Funds	62,581	61,223	88,392
- % of income	7.5%	6.8%	9.3%
Total expenditure	933,709	868,524	931,058
Free unrestricted reserves:			
Free unrestricted reserves held at year end	131,058	151,058	224,045
No of months of operating expenditure	1.7	2.1	2.9
Reserves policy target	233,427	217,131	232,765
No of months of total expenditure	3.0	3.0	3.0
Free reserves over/(under) target	(102,369)	(66,073)	(8,720)

Recommendation

Chance UK is a well-respected charity providing support for disadvantaged children at a critical stage in their development. Its early intervention approach is both innovative and proven at least in the short-term. This project is a good fit with Stronger Communities' aims: it will enhance the wellbeing and life chances of young CoL residents by engaging members of their local community to understand and address their needs.

£10,000 to cover the staffing and project costs of providing specialist mentoring to two children with severe emotional and behavioural needs, living on City of London housing estates in Southwark.

CENTRAL GRANTS PROGRAMME

ASSESSMENT CATEGORY – Stronger Communities

Forget Me Not Memory Café (Ref: 15147)

Amount requested: £10,000

Amount recommended: £10,000

Purpose of grant request: A fortnightly “City Connect” activity club promoting wellbeing and building community for City of London residents isolated by mental or physical ill health, old age, disability or for other reasons.

The Applicant

Forget Me Not Memory Café is a registered charity whose primary objective is to support people with dementia and their carer's. Staff and volunteers provide advice and wellbeing activities through weekly groups in Essex and the City of London. In partnership with Toynbee Hall, the organisation has a contract with CoLC to deliver the City Memory Group at the City of London Community Education Centre in Golden Lane; this forms part of the City of London's Reach Out Network which aims to promote wellbeing and decrease isolation for residents.

Background and detail of proposal

Forget Me Not has noted that isolation is very common among vulnerable city residents. People attending the memory group can end up making friends with close neighbours of many years to whom they had previously never spoken. It has also received feedback from residents living on the east side of the City, e.g. Aldgate and Portsoken wards, who would like to attend on a regular basis but whose age or ill health prevents them from travelling across the City to do so, or who have needs other than dementia. The charity therefore proposes to create a new pilot wellbeing group based at Artizan Street Library, bringing together vulnerable and isolated people from that part of the City. The group will meet fortnightly and will provide opportunities to socialise with neighbours, share stories and participate in a range of creative and physical activities aimed at supporting the wellbeing of those who attend. Artizan Street Library has offered use of its space for free throughout the pilot. While this location is near the City of London/Tower Hamlets border and there may therefore be a very small proportion of beneficiaries who are resident in Tower Hamlets, the project will target City of London residents.

Financial Information

While free reserves are on the low side, the organisation's income and expenditure is overwhelmingly through restricted grants and contracts which cover delivery and running costs. It is anticipated that Forget Me Not's key contract with the City of London Corporation is likely to be renewed and possibly expanded for 2019/20, therefore there are no concerns about the organisation's financial stability during this period. There is a projected jump in income in 2020 due to anticipated new partnerships and increased fundraising activity.

Year end as at:	29/05/2018 (9 months)	31/05/2019	31/05/2020
	Accounts	Forecast	Budget
	£	£	£
Income & expenditure:			
Income	27,508	37,000	71,000
- % of Income confirmed as at 14/1/2019	N/A	97%	0%
Expenditure	(22,127)	(36,500)	(70,500)
Total surplus/(deficit)	5,381	500	500
Split between:			
- Restricted surplus/(deficit)	4,662	0	0
- Unrestricted surplus/(deficit)	719	500	500
	5,381	500	500
Cost of Raising Funds	0	0	0
- % of income	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Total expenditure	22,127	36,500	70,500
Free unrestricted reserves:			
Free unrestricted reserves held at year end	4,892	5,392	5,892
No of months of operating expenditure	2.7	1.8	1.0
Reserves policy target	N/A	N/A	N/A

Recommendation

This project is a good fit with the Stronger Communities programme as it promotes wellbeing for City of London residents and encourages them to develop stronger relationships with their neighbours. The organisation is small but has a wealth of relevant expertise in running projects of this kind. A clear need is evidenced by demand from individuals within the community and by Artizan Street Library's offer of free space in recognition of this need.

£10,000 towards the staffing, publicity and running costs of a fortnightly "City Connect" activity club at Artizan Street Library, for vulnerable and isolated City of London residents. This grant is conditional upon a minimum 95% of participants being resident in the City of London or on City of London managed housing estates.

CENTRAL GRANTS PROGRAMME

ASSESSMENT CATEGORY – Stronger Communities

Mint Street Music Festival (Ref: 15143)

Amount requested: £9,431

Amount recommended: £7,020

Purpose of grant request: This grant is to sustain the events and activities undertaken by Mint Street Music Festival Team during 2019/20.

The Applicant

Mint Street Music Festival (MSMF) is a constituted voluntary organisation, with three Trustees who meet 4 times a year or when necessary depending on their festival schedule. The Trustees are all residents of City of London owned housing estates. The Charity's objects are to provide music, dance displays and activities for all members of the community, specifically residents of Southwark and the surrounding area. They have been running the Mint Street Music Festival and Mardi Gras festivals in Borough and Bankside for several years.

Background and detail of proposal

This application is looking for funding towards the 2019 Mardi Gras event in February and the Mint Street Music Festival in July, additional funding is also sought for a community garden project and play group. The event targets residents of local housing estates and the wider community. Residents of Collinson Court, Great Suffolk Street, Sumner Buildings and Pakeham House are all involved in the set up and delivery of both festivals. Funding was awarded last year to deliver both festivals in 2018, which were successful events.

The Mardi Gras festival will take place in February with rehearsals for the musicians commencing in early January. The Mardi Gras will bring together a Pancake day celebration, Latin American Mardi Gras and Italian Carnivale traditions. Music, food, dance and activities for all ages will be available for all the community. The Mint Street Music Festival is a larger and more established festival that will take place in July 2019. The festival usually attracts around 3000 people and has a stage with a variety of music and dance that reflects the cultures of the residents and communities. Both festivals will bring together residents from the City of London owned housing estates and wider community. Connections have also been established with other City owned housing estates such as Avondale Estate, with volunteering opportunities being planned.

Additional to the two festivals the Mint Street Team are seeking funding towards some of the year round work they deliver. Funding is also being sought to support a community garden club and children's playgroup.

Financial Information

MSMF have a small turnover and depend on grant income and the funds they raise delivering the festival events. They hold small reserves and only deliver projects they have funding for. In 2019 they anticipate an increase in the size and scope of the festivals and the provision they deliver throughout the year which is outlined in the significant expected increase in turnover.

Year end as at 31 September	2017 Accounts £	2018 Draft £	2019 Budget £
Income & expenditure:			
Income	10,349	14,878	32,920
- % of Income confirmed as at 18/01/2019	n/a	100%	5%
Expenditure	(14,979)	(14,878)	(32,100)
Total surplus/(deficit)	(4,630)	0	820
Split between:			
- Restricted surplus/(deficit)	0	0	0
- Unrestricted surplus/(deficit)	(4,630)	0	820
	(4,630)	0	820
Cost of Raising Funds	0	0	2,375
- % of income	0.0%	0.0%	7.2%
Total Expenditure	14,979	14,878	32,100
Free unrestricted reserves:			
Free unrestricted reserves held at year end	688	688	1,508
No of months of operating expenditure	0.6	0.6	0.6

Recommendation

This application fits very closely to the sub-theme of the Stronger Communities programme as it will develop stronger neighbourhoods and communities in the City of London Housing estates. This project has a focus on all the Southwark estates that are maintained by the City of London. It will provide two celebration events for a modest budget that will have a great benefit and legacy for the local community. At assessment it was clear that the Mardi Gras and Festival were worthwhile activities to support. However, the additional request to support the Playgroup and Gardening project should be removed from the budget. At assessment I was not satisfied with the level of safeguarding expertise within the organisation and felt that some of these services, specifically the playgroup, fell outside the objects of the organisation. The budget has therefore been reduced to remove these items. Funding is recommended as follows:

£7,020 to support the rehearsal, coordination, publicity and other associated costs of a Mardi Gras festival in February and the Mint Street Music festival in July 2019.

CENTRAL GRANTS PROGRAMME

ASSESSMENT CATEGORY – STRONGER COMMUNITIES

Repowering Limited (ref. 15144)

Amount requested: £10,000

Amount recommended: £10,000

Purpose of grant request:

To support Middlesex Street Estate residents to establish a community-owned solar energy co-op that will generate funds for local community projects, through the sale of green energy to businesses and public entities.

The Applicant

Founded in 2013, Repowering Ltd is a London based registered co-operative that supports communities to set up their own community-owned renewable energy co-ops. Once these are established it provides ongoing advice and support and helps the co-ops to attract investment. It has already established a strong track record, setting up energy co-ops on five estates across Lambeth and Hackney. Four others are in progress. These successes have led to two significant partnerships: with Groundwork London and London Overground on the Energy Gardens scheme, and with Lambeth Council to deliver further community energy projects in the borough.

Background and detail of proposal

Repowering Ltd requests £10,000 towards the costs of supporting a group of residents on the City of London's Middlesex Street Estate to create a community solar energy project as described above. It will establish a small energy co-op to install solar panels on the Middlesex Street Estate and sell the resultant energy to local organisations. Surplus income will go into a community fund to be spent on projects benefiting Middlesex Street Estate residents. It has secured funding for the project from the Mayor of London's London Community Energy Fund (LCEF), which is partly being used to carry out a technical and financial feasibility study for the project, due in February 2019. A proposal was presented to the CoL Housing Management and Almshouses Sub Committee of 21 January 2019; an update on this will be provided at the Stronger Communities Officer Panel.

Financial Information

The organisation is in reasonable financial health: at 3.7 months' operating costs, free reserves are above the organisation's modest target of £20,000. It has secured 65% of projected 2019 income less than one month into the first quarter.

Year end as at 31 December	2017	2018	2019
	Unaudited Accounts	Draft Accounts	Budget
	£	£	£
Income & expenditure:			
Income	267,072	566,574	517,900
- % of Income confirmed as at 11/1/2019	N/A	N/A	78%
Expenditure	(262,563)	(453,886)	(611,628)
Total surplus/(deficit)	4,509	112,688	(93,728)
Split between:			
- Restricted surplus/(deficit)	0	102,708	(83,748)
- Unrestricted surplus/(deficit)	4,509	9,980	8,980
	4,509	112,688	(74,768)
Cost of Raising Funds	26,500	31,539	40,000
- % of income	9.9%	5.6%	7.7%
Operating expenditure (unrestricted funds)	38,952	54,556	90,000
Free unrestricted reserves:			
Free unrestricted reserves held at year end	8,987	18,967	27,947
No of months of operating expenditure	2.8	4.2	3.7
Reserves policy target	20,000	20,000	20,000
No of months of operating expenditure	6.2	4.4	2.7
Free reserves over/(under) target	(11,013)	(1,033)	7,947

Recommendation

This proposal is an excellent and innovative fit with the Stronger Communities programme as it seeks to:

- Improve City of London residents' environment by promoting green energy sources;
- Bring members of a local community together to work for the whole of that community's benefit and develop their own skills; and
- To generate funds that can be re-invested in other projects for the benefit of that community.

The project is well-planned with clear timescales and understanding of the steps needed to bring it to fruition. It is clear that a grant from the City of London, if made, would be used effectively.

£10,000 towards the costs of establishing a community energy project to install solar panels on the Middlesex Street Estate. This grant is conditional upon the ongoing approval of the City of London at each stage of the project.

CENTRAL GRANTS PROGRAMME

ASSESSMENT CATEGORY – STRONGER COMMUNITIES (Small Grants)

Strictly Stylish Sequence Dancers (ref. 15152)

Amount requested: £2,000

Amount recommended: £2,000

Purpose of grant request:

To continue running dance recreation activities for older City of London residents.

The Applicant

Strictly Stylish Sequence Dancers (SSSD) is a community Unincorporated Association running weekly dance classes, monthly practice sessions and occasional events and excursions for City of London residents. While there is no formal minimum age, all members are over 55. The group aims to promote physical and mental wellbeing and to provide an opportunity for members to socialise and enjoy each other's company. SSSD was funded annually by the City of London Corporation between 2012 and 2017, with grants ranging from £600 - £1,600.

Background and detail of proposal

SSSD requests a grant towards the running costs of its monthly dance classes and one-off events such as a twice-yearly party and two dance related excursions. Classes are partly funded by attendees' annual subscriptions and class fees. However, in order to keep the cost of attending low and thereby make the group as financially accessible as possible, the charity fundraises to subsidise these fees and to cover the costs of additional events and trips.

Financial Information

At 31st December 2018 the group held free reserves of £6,119, equivalent to 41 months' expenditure. While this may appear excessive, the charity experienced difficulties in 2018 due to staff bereavement and a move to a new venue where building works are now being carried out. As a result, attendance at classes has halved. This drop-in income from class fees creates a shortfall in funding for classes that it is covering from reserves. It plans to recover attendance figures by advertising to potential new/previous members but in the meantime anticipates that the drop-in attendance – and therefore in income – may continue well into 2019. They are therefore fundraising to maintain a level of reserves capable of covering the temporary shortfall in income from fees, keeping the group running at a low cost for those who are attending.

Year end as at 31 December	2017	2018	2019	
	Accounts	Draft Accounts	Budget	
	£	£	£	
Income & expenditure:				
Income	4,307	3,564	1,580	*
- % of Income confirmed as at 11/01/2019	N/A	N/A	0%	
Expenditure	(3,009)	(1,794)	(3,560)	
Total surplus/(deficit)	1,298	1,770	(1,980)	
Split between:				
- Restricted surplus/(deficit)	0	0	0	
- Unrestricted surplus/(deficit)	1,298	1,770	(1,980)	
	1,298	1,770	(1,980)	
Cost of Raising Funds	0	0	0	
- % of income	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	
Total expenditure	3,009	1,793	3,560	
Free unrestricted reserves:				
Free unrestricted reserves held at year end	4,349	6,119	4,139	
No of months of operating expenditure	17.3	41.0	14.0	
Reserves policy target	N/A	N/A	N/A	

* N.B Projected income shown here does not factor in any potential grant from CoL.

Recommendation

This request is a good fit for Stronger Communities as it helps to promote health and wellbeing for older City of London residents. Funding is recommended as follows:

£2,000 towards the costs of providing 12 monthly practice sessions, two parties and two excursions. This offer is conditional on the grant being spent entirely during 2019 and on the organisation updating its safeguarding policy in line with current good practice.