

MEETING: 26/9/2019

Ref: 15171

ASSESSMENT CATEGORY: Bridging Divides - Connecting the Capital

Culpeper Community Garden

Adv: Lily Brandhorst

Amount requested: £101,273

Base: Islington

Benefit: Islington

Amount recommended: £101,270

The Applicant

"This garden is like paradise for us, because when I came here I was very depressed and without hope. It was winter and now for me it's spring." – Culpeper Volunteer

Culpeper Community Garden (CIO no. 1176277) is a community-run green space in the heart of Islington. It aims to provide a beautiful, sustainable garden open seven days a week, where people from all backgrounds, ages and abilities can relax, garden and learn about horticulture and the environment. The garden is divided into 50 plots for local people without gardens and for local partner organisations, plus communal areas. Members and volunteers are encouraged and supported to be actively involved in running and caring for the garden. Culpeper organises a wide range of social and educational activities. It has been judged Outstanding for the past four years in the RHS London in Bloom competition and won a distinction in 2016. Judges commented that: "Culpeper is an outstanding example of community gardening in the city. It's social and therapeutic horticulture at its best."

The Application

Culpeper seeks funding towards the costs of employing two part-time Garden Workers and associated costs of their work with vulnerable and disadvantaged community members. A grant will cover the costs of at least:

- 720 hours a year (13 hpw) of supported gardening activities with beneficiary groups from local partner charities (see background section for details);
- 232 hours a year (4.5 hpw) of gardening sessions for individual volunteers, with a high proportion of disadvantaged participants; and
- Twelve community events/activities per year, including the annual pensioners' Strawberry Tea, day trips, plant sales and barbecues.

Through this grant, it is anticipated that over 140 Londoners per year will benefit from reduced social isolation, increased community involvement and improved physical/mental wellbeing. They will also acquire practical skills and gardening/environmental knowledge.

The Recommendation

Culpeper Community Garden is clearly a valued local community asset and provides a much-needed hub for more vulnerable local residents. Support from City Bridge Trust would enable this important work to continue, securing funding for the next five years towards some of the organisation's key activities and helping leverage support from other funding sources. A grant is recommended as follows:

£101,270 over five years (£17,600; £20,000; £20,600; £21,215; £21,855) towards the salary and on-costs of two P/T Garden Workers and a contribution towards activities and running costs relating to Culpeper's work with vulnerable Islington residents. Release of subsequent years' funding is subject to receipt of satisfactory year-end management accounts.

Ref:

Funding History

Meeting Date	Decision
26/04/2012	£24,970 over three years (£8,000; £8,320; £8,650) towards the salary and on costs of two part time community garden workers and running costs of environmental education work.
30/11/2006	£50,000 towards the capital costs of constructing a new resource centre, subject to written confirmation of a 50 year lease from the local authority and to the balance of funds needed being raised.
08/09/2005	Organisation has been in contact with the Trust to withdraw application.
17/05/2001	£17,200 over 3 years (£3,200, £7,000, £7,000) to increase staffing hours.

Background and detail of proposal

Culpeper was established in 1983; in 2018, 628 people were actively involved in the garden as plot holders, garden members and volunteers. The two Garden Workers are essential to the charity's operation, undertaking a wide range of tasks in relation to the garden's upkeep, management, and support/advice for volunteers and groups. They are supported in this by the Management Committee. As part of this grant's delivery, Garden Workers will provide supported gardening activities for beneficiary groups from the following charities: Islington Mind; Room to Heal (asylum seekers and refugees); the Elfrida Society (adults with learning difficulties); Stuart Low (isolated and vulnerable people); and Mencap. They will also support individual garden volunteers who are disadvantaged. Half of Culpeper's users have physical or mental health needs. Many experience social isolation, are on low incomes or unemployed.

Financial Information

Competition for grants has led to losses in recent years, impacting the charity's free reserves. It has clear plans to diversify its income, to increase funding, prevent further losses and rebuild reserves.

Year end as at 31st March	2018	2019	2020
	Signed Accounts £	Draft Accounts £	Forecast £
Income & expenditure:			
Income	46,021	42,456	35,077
- % of income confirmed as at 29/7/19	N/A	N/A	60%
Expenditure	(61,701)	(58,650)	(58,167)
Total surplus/(deficit)	(15,680)	(16,194)	(23,090)
Split between:			
- Restricted surplus/(deficit)	(9,843)	(7,261)	(1,214)
- Unrestricted surplus/(deficit)	(1,240)	(4,336)	(21,876)
- Depreciation of designated assets	(4,597)	(4,597)	N/A
	(15,680)	(16,194)	(23,090)
Cost of Raising Funds			
Cost of Raising Funds	1,305	817	850
- % of income	2.8%	1.9%	2.4%
Operating expenditure	54,368	53,210	51,573
Free unrestricted reserves:			
Free unrestricted reserves held at year end	30,745	26,409	4,533
No of months of operating expenditure	6.8	6.0	1.1
Reserves policy target	27,184	26,605	25,787
No of months of operating expenditure	6.0	6.0	6.0
Free reserves over/(under) target	3,561	(196)	(21,254)