



Stronger Communities

Assessment Pack

Jack Joslin & Lily Brandhosrt

CENTRAL GRANTS PROGRAMME

ASSESSMENT CATEGORY: a) Stronger Communities
The Barbican Tuesday Club (ref. 16444)

Amount requested: £2,000

Amount recommended: £2,000

Purpose of grant request: To support the costs of weekly meetings for older isolated people on the Barbican Estate.

The Applicant

The Barbican Tuesday Club (BTC) is a small voluntary constituted organisation, with 4 committee members. The club has been running since the 1970's and provides social opportunities for older and often isolated residents of the Barbican to socialise.

Background and detail of proposal

BTC has been running for over 30 years and schedule a range of talks, visits, coach outings and parties throughout the year to tackle social isolation of older residents on the Barbican Estate. Funding is being sought to pay for a coach trip to the seaside, educational visits to museums and galleries, speakers to visit the group, a summer and Christmas party and a New Year lunch. The schedule of events and trips will start in the spring of 2019 and will carry on over a 12-month period.

Financial Information

BTC have a very small turnover and rely on a small grant each year and membership fees to ensure that they can run all the events they wish to.

Recommendation

This application clearly meets the outcomes of the Stronger Communities programme as it both develops stronger communities while improving the health and well-being with older residents of the Barbican Estate. BTC have been running this well attended club for a long time and have a range of interesting trips, talks and excursions planned which this funding will support. Funding is therefore recommended as follows:

£2,000 to support the cost of a coach outing, educational visits, speakers, a Christmas and summer party and a new year lunch for older isolated residents of the Barbican.

CENTRAL GRANTS PROGRAMME

ASSESSMENT CATEGORY: a) Stronger Communities

Faith Matters CIC (ref. 16436)

Amount requested: £8,740

Amount recommended: £8,740

Purpose of grant request: To create a social media campaign targeting City of London residents, by producing a series of short videos challenging extremist conspiracy theories around Covid-19

The Applicant

Faith Matters CIC (FM) launched in 2006 as a vehicle to enable faith communities to reduce conflict using conflict resolution tools. It works on integration, cohesion, hate crime and countering extremism projects. Faith Matters has also influenced social policy at local, regional and governmental levels through its research reports. Its programmes strengthen the capacity of faith leadership, working on developing shared values that act as a glue between communities and in developing voices against extremism and extremist rhetoric. It has also specialised in online campaigns against extremism.

Background and detail of proposal

FM has worked with individual residents of the City of London through TellMAMA, its service supporting victims of anti-muslim hate crime. This has included work on issues including housing, racism, discrimination and domestic abuse. Based on this experience it has found that City residents can sometimes feel isolated from the wider City of London community. Such feelings of isolation can only be compounded by the isolation of Covid-19. FM is also aware of the online dissemination of conspiracy theories about the Coronavirus, propagated by both UK far right and Islamic extremist groups. People who are feeling disconnected from the community may be more vulnerable to such misinformation.

To combat this, FM seeks funding to create and disseminate via social media three 60-90 second videos challenging extremist Covid-19 theories and reinforcing a sense of community and connection to others. Videos will invoke a sense of community pride by reflecting on the challenges Londoners have faced together in the past, on the pluralism of the NHS, and on the faith communities – such as churches and mosques – which are there for people even though they may be closed at present. Videos will be targeted at City of London housing estate residents but will also be shown to audiences in other parts of London and the UK. They will be shared primarily via Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. In order to reach the older generation and people who do not use these platforms, videos will also be shared via Whatsapp, which enjoys wider use. The video assets will also be shared with the CoL Police, so that they can help disseminate them to target groups. It is hoped as a result of watching the videos people will be better equipped to check the facts and will feel more part of a community with their neighbours.

Financial Information

The organisation is in a reasonably stable position financially, with reserves increasing. It anticipates that 2021 income could take a hit from Covid-19 measures, but is working to move much of its engagement work online to avoid disruption as far as possible. 82% of 2021 income is confirmed, so the organisation should be able to survive the pandemic.

Year end as at 31st March	2019	2020	2021
	Draft Accounts	Draft Accounts	Forecast
	£	£	£
Income & expenditure:			
Income	902,355	690,000	690,141
- % of Income confirmed as at 1/6/2020:	N/A	N/A	82%
Expenditure	(842,342)	(628,000)	(513,575)
Total surplus/(deficit)	60,013	62,000	176,566
Split between:			
- Restricted surplus/(deficit)	69,038	55,000	29,566
- Unrestricted surplus/(deficit)	(9,025)	7,000	147,000
	60,013	62,000	176,566
Total expenditure	842,342	628,000	513,575
Free unrestricted reserves:			
Free unrestricted reserves held at year end	103,738	110,738	257,738
No of months of total expenditure	1.5	2.1	6.0

Recommendation

This proposal meets the programme criteria of seeking to strengthen communities resident in the City of London. There are many individuals who are isolated and vulnerable at this time. Your officer was initially sceptical about the idea of a social media campaign but the expertise and learning FM has from its work in this area suggests that such a campaign can make a difference to people's resistance to extremist ideas and their faith in the communities around them. Research exists to suggest that by debunking and disrupting misinformation before it becomes entrenched, it can lose its hold.¹ There is a question as to whether a campaign so reliant on digital technology will reach the most vulnerable and isolated, who may not use digital devices. A grant could be recommended as follows:

£8,740 to create a social media campaign targeting City of London estate residents, by producing a series of short videos challenging extremist conspiracy theories and promoting a sense of community during the Covid-19 pandemic.

¹ "Who is most likely to believe and share misinformation?", Dr Dora Olivia Vicol, 2020

CENTRAL GRANTS PROGRAMME

ASSESSMENT CATEGORY: a) Stronger Communities

**St Mary Moorfields Parish (Westminster Roman Catholic Diocese)
(ref. 16435)**

Amount requested: £3,500

Amount recommended: £3,500

Purpose of grant request: Lecture on history of the City of London and a panel speaker event to equip participants to serve the community.

The Applicant

St Mary Moorfields in Eldon Street, between Moorgate and Liverpool Street station, is the only Catholic church in the City of London. Founded in 1820, it has a long history of work in the community, opening its doors in 1860 as a night shelter for homeless men and women, regardless of faith: the organisation Providence Row has its origins in this work. Formally, this application is from the Westminster Roman Catholic Diocesan Trust, a registered charity of which St Mary Moorfields Parish is part.

Background and detail of proposal

In its bicentennial year, looking back to its earlier social work, St Mary Moorfields is now considering what it can offer the wider community in and around the City of London. To this end it wishes to organise a public talk on the church's history and the social history of the surrounding area. It also wants to host an event organised by its Young City Catholics group, taking Providence Row as a case study of what social engagement can look like in practice. Charities will be invited to contribute their expertise. The event will be aimed at young City professionals of all faiths and none. It will encourage discussion about how they can make the changes they want to see in society, for example through volunteering, and how to take the lead within their organisations to promote public benefit. Both events will be free and the church hopes that they will be the first of many. It has been discussing the event with other City organisations such as Heart of the City, Museum of London and of course Providence Row. Its network of contacts will help to publicise the event. Originally intended for the summer of 2020, due to the Coronavirus pandemic the events have been rescheduled for November 2020.

Financial Information

The charity is working to bring its reserves up to the level of £9,000,000 – a modest two months' total expenditure. Income is falling, partly due to declining parishioner numbers as families return to other European countries in the light of the UK leaving the EU. The charity is bringing expenditure down, but anticipates this will take a few years to fully implement.

Year end as at 31st December	2018	2019	2020
	Signed Accounts	Draft accounts	Forecast
	£	£	£
Income & expenditure:			
Income	70,977,000	53,360,000	54,066,000
- % of Income confirmed as at	N/A	100%	2%
Expenditure	(44,394,000)	(52,134,000)	(52,430,000)
Total surplus/(deficit)	26,583,000	1,226,000	1,636,000
Split between:			
- Restricted surplus/(deficit)	25,856,000	3,381,000	3,271,000
- Unrestricted surplus/(deficit)	727,000	(2,155,000)	(1,635,000)
	26,583,000	1,226,000	1,636,000
Total expenditure	44,393,000	52,134,000	52,430,000
Free unrestricted reserves:			
Free unrestricted reserves held at year end	7,075,000	4,920,000	3,285,000
No of months of operating expenditure	1.9	1.1	0.8
Reserves policy target	9,000,000	9,000,000	9,000,000
No of months of operating expenditure	2.4	2.1	2.1
Free reserves over/(under) target	(1,925,000)	(4,080,000)	(5,715,000)

Recommendation

This proposal can arguably be said to meet the criteria of Stronger Communities: it aims to encourage people in the City to become more involved in their communities and would promote the creation of new and potentially innovative community projects. It also links well with the city's volunteering and philanthropy agenda. A grant could be recommended as follows:

£3,500 for events on history of the City of London and a panel speaker event to equip participants to serve the community

CENTRAL GRANTS PROGRAMME

ASSESSMENT CATEGORY: a) Stronger Communities

Tower Hamlets Youth Sport Foundation (ref. 16354)

Amount requested: £9,000

Amount recommended: £9,000

Purpose of grant request: A contribution towards the costs of establishing cricket activities for children in the City, Tower Hamlets and Islington

The Applicant

Tower Hamlets Youth Sport Foundation (THYSF) was formed in 2012 to continue the work previously developed and provided under the School Sport Partnerships in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets (LBTH). THYSF continued to deliver sports activities in the borough's schools, working in partnership with the council. In 2018/19 the Trustees opted to bring these activities to a close, as they were no longer financially viable. Since 2018 the charity has run the Platform Cricket programme for children in Tower Hamlets and other inner London boroughs. As well as seeking to improve young people's health and fitness, it also works to indirectly support educational attainment, social cohesion and reductions in anti-social behaviour.

Background and detail of proposal

THYSF seeks funding to run its Platform Cricket programme for disadvantaged children in the City, Tower Hamlets and Islington. The programme has two main aims: to improve the lives and future prospects of young people through sport, and to contribute to the diversification of UK elite cricket, in which state-educated and BAME players are underrepresented. Drawing on THYSF's experience of delivering sports activities in inner London boroughs, it will work by removing some of the key barriers to participation in cricket such as cost, distance to travel to the activity and the image of cricket as being exclusive or old fashioned.

The project will create two cricket clubs: one encompassing Portsoken, Spitalfields/Banglatown and Whitechapel, the other Aldersgate, Cripple Gate, Farringdon, Clerkenwell and Bunhill. It will work with 14 state schools across the two areas, many of which will draw pupils from City of London housing estates. Phase one, starting in September 2020, will be a five-week schools' programme for Year 4 with delivery in schools (not part of statutory PE provision). Information about the new clubs will be circulated to participants during this phase. In phase two, children interested in continuing with cricket will join their nearest club, attending weekly training sessions at evenings and weekends and beginning to play competitions around February half-term 2021. Children who have completed one year in the programme will be encouraged to stay for a second year. As it will be in its pilot phase in this area of London, THYSF will work with local schools, parents and communities to see how the programme develops and whether provision over third and fourth years is a desirable and achievable option.

Covid-19 measures may mean that the project has to start later than the planned date of 14th September. THYSF is working with schools on this and will postpone the start date as necessary.

Financial Information

The charity is building its reserves since the end of its longstanding relationship with LB Tower Hamlets in 2018/19. Covid-19 is having an impact on its ability to fundraise over the summer of 2020, as an important source of income is from people participating in sporting events. However grant income will mostly be delayed rather than lost (due to the pushing back of project start dates). Because most staff are sessional workers, it is easier for it to scale back expenditure until activities can start up again. The charity is confident of its survival and has contingency plans in place – such as increasing grants fundraising and running some additional, income generating programmes in more affluent areas of London.

Year end as at 31st March	2019	2020	2021
	Signed Accounts	Draft accounts	Forecast
	£	£	£
Income & expenditure:			
Income	127,799	142,608	257,149
- % of Income confirmed as at 15/05/2020	N/A	100%	35%
Expenditure	(158,749)	(136,721)	(255,000)
Total surplus/(deficit)	(30,950)	5,887	2,149
Split between:			
- Restricted surplus/(deficit)	(28,140)	(2,763)	(24,083)
- Unrestricted surplus/(deficit)	(2,810)	8,650	26,232
	(30,950)	5,887	2,149
Operating Expenditure (unrestricted)	63,564	85,028	180,000
Free unrestricted reserves:			
Free unrestricted reserves held at year end	9,637	18,287	44,519
No of months of operating expenditure	1.8	2.6	3.0
Reserves policy target	31,782	42,514	90,000
No of months of operating expenditure	6.0	6.0	6.0
Free reserves over/(under) target	(22,145)	(24,227)	(45,481)

Recommendation

It is unclear how many children resident in the City of London this programme will engage. However the assumption, based on THYSF's previous work with three of the proposed schools, that some children attending schools on the City's fringes will be CoL residents, may be reasonable. The proposed programme is ambitious but delivered by an organisation with considerable experience and working relationships with some of the schools it wishes to engage. In summary, an interesting pilot but one that may be considered to stretch the programme's geographical criteria slightly too far. A grant could be recommended as follows:

£9,000 towards the costs of establishing the Platform Cricket programme for children in the City, Tower Hamlets and Islington

CENTRAL GRANTS PROGRAMME

ASSESSMENT CATEGORY: a) Stronger Communities

Tudor Rose Court Residents' Association (ref. 17307)

Amount requested: £9,975

Amount recommended: £3,000

Purpose of grant request: Purchase of comfortable and attractive furniture for our residents' lounge to enable suitably distanced social interaction between residents and guests.

The Applicant

The Tudor Rose Court Residents Association (TRCRA) is a voluntary constituted organisation set up to look after the interests of the tenants and residents at Tudor Rose Court. The Association works with residents to ensure they are consulted, improve relationships between residents and the manager and preserve local amenities in the area.

Background and detail of proposal

Tudor Rose Court is a sheltered housing scheme with 35 mostly single-occupancy flats. The TRCRA is looking to create an attractive and comfortable space where residents can meet socially. Tudor Rose Court has extensive Communal facilities that are currently underused due to the furniture being over 20 years old. The TRCA are requesting funding to buy new Sofas, Chairs and soft furnishings to make the area more attractive. In turn this will improve the community spirit as there will be space where people wish to meet socially.

Financial Information

The organisation has a very small turnover and hold funds for work on the gardens and for social events each year. This grant would significantly increase turnover, but these are for one of items.

Recommendation

This application meets the criteria of the Stronger Communities fund as it will improve communal areas in Tudor Rose Court which will lead to more social activity. However, there are several issues that need to be considered too. This application arrived one month after the deadline. Normally we would decline an application for this, however I have given this the benefit of the doubt and brought it to panel to discuss. The Panel felt the budget was very high and that there had not been a good enough case made for the purchase of designer furniture, where much cheaper alternatives could be sourced. The panel also felt there needed to be a risk assessment completed on the spacing of furniture to ensure it complied with social distancing and public health guidelines. Any funding is made conditional on this. Therefore, a much reduced grant of £3,000 has been approved. Funding is recommended as follows:

£3,000 towards the cost of furniture to improve the communal areas on Tudor Rose Court. Funding being released is conditional on the Residents Association seeking a Covid-19 related risk assessment from the landlord to ensure that the spacing of the furniture adheres to social distancing and public health guidelines.