

Small Grants Scheme

Evaluation 2013

City of London Volunteering Service



Introduction

In 2012 the CSV City of London Volunteering Service was commissioned by the Corporation to develop, promote and administrate a Small Grants Scheme with the aim of supporting local community projects within the City of London Borough through the provision of small grants to local voluntary and community groups.

It was expected that the projects funded would enable more people to become involved in their communities in a range of positive ways. It was also hoped that the local groups would encourage a broader understanding of some of the needs and opportunities people have in their communities. The scheme was designed to support the City of London's strategic aims as set out within the City Together Strategy and Adult Wellbeing Policy.

In addition to administrating and promoting the Small Grant Scheme, the City of London Volunteering Service is responsible for consulting with grant applicants and enabling them to make applications to meet the criteria laid out in the small grants application pack.

City of London's Strategic Aims

1. To enhance and promote a better quality of life for residents with the indicators:

- Residents feel safe in their community
- Residents lead health and active lifestyles
- Residents feel pride in the community to which they belong
- Reduced isolation of elderly and vulnerable residents
- Residents learn new skills or develop existing skills
- Prevention of possible future problems
- Promotion of intergenerational activity
- Minority or economically disadvantaged groups are benefitted
- Opportunities for young City residents

2. To improve the City of London departments value for money, efficiency & performance

3. To increase stakeholder involvement/partnership working to drive service improvement

4. To build on the reputation of the City and the department by actively promoting the department's good work.

Funding Awards

The Small Grants Panel made awards to thirteen organisations that applied for funding. The utilisation of funds for each of these organisations is outlined in the body of this report.

The Sir Ralph Perring Club

Organisation Description

A social club for over 60's residents living on the Golden Lane Estate in the Barbican. This includes a weekly social club meeting as well as specifically organised evening events and outings for the residents. This year saw the fiftieth anniversary of the club and part of the small grants funding was used to hold an event to commemorate this milestone.



Funds Utilised For:

- Coach hire cost for a day trip for members
- Lunch for club members on day trip
- 50 year anniversary celebration event
- St George's day social gathering
- Christmas social gathering
- Tea event with the Lady Mayoress
- New chairs for club room

Project Co-ordinator's Report

The Project Co-ordinator reported that the funding provided a very enjoyable day out for members to Southend, along with a number of other ongoing and one off social events. These kinds of trips and gatherings make a big difference to the lives of elderly residents who would otherwise not have opportunities to get out and about and socialise in this way.

“The club is very grateful” for the small grants provision and without the funding from the City of London they would struggle to exist in their current format.

Thirty elderly residents were assisted and supported through provision of this grant.

Project Participants Report

Jean aged eighty four and a long-time resident of the local area. She has been attending the project for twenty five years and found out about it through a friend in the local area.

Jean says that she feels healthier, more involved in her local community and less socially excluded as a result of participating in this project, and expresses considerable hope that the project will be able to continue because it makes a big difference to her life and gives her the opportunity to regularly socialise with other residents in the area.

She feels that the needs of the club members are simple and that they would never ask for anything more than the odd day out here and there and a weekly social meeting, and that this is enough for them and they are very happy that way.

She also feels that the existence of the club provides safety and security for her because it means she can regularly be in touch with other local people and doesn't feel alone on the estate.

City of London Strategic Aims Met

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1. Residents feeling safer in their community
2. Residents leading active and healthier lifestyles
3. Elderly and isolated residents supported
4. Residents having pride in their community
5. Work of the City of London supported

Barbican Tuesday Club

Organisation Description

A social club for retired and senior residents on the Barbican Estate, including weekly social gatherings, educational talks, visits to places of interest and biannual outings to the seaside and National Trust Gardens. The group has been running for over forty years and has regular guest speakers who come and give them talks at meetings.



Funds Utilised For:

- Coach hire for outings
- Local visits to London museums
- Christmas and New Year parties
- Speakers visiting the club
- Purchase of a projector

Project Co-ordinator's Report

The Project Co-ordinator reported that the funding provision helped the group organise a range of very beneficial outings and activities and also to purchase a projector in order to offer information films to group members in future.

The co-ordinator affirmed that the funding enabled elderly residents to access events and outings that would normally not be available to them, and also the provision of ongoing companionship and a sense of support and community.

Twenty eight elderly residents were assisted and supported through provision of this grant.

Project Participant's Report

Bridget is eighty three years old and attends the project to feel more involved with other residents living in the area. She very much enjoys the activities and outings with fellow residents and speaks highly of the talks they receive from guest speakers also. She is disabled and struggles to get out and about without assistance so the project is vital to her in providing contact and the opportunity to get out and about occasionally.

Joyce is eighty years old and heard about the project through reading about it in a local community magazine. She feels more active and connected to her community through attending the project. She feels it offers her the opportunity to meet and mix with people from a range of different backgrounds that she would not normally encounter or socialise with. Joyce is a reasonably new resident in the area and points out that the project has offered her the chance to get to know people in order to build up friendships, and has helped her to feel more comfortable about living in a new area. Her view about the project in general is "long may it continue".

City of London Strategic Aims Met

1. Residents feeling safer in their community
2. Residents leading active and healthier lifestyles
3. Elderly and isolated residents supported
4. Residents having pride in their community
5. Work of the City of London supported
6. Risk of future problems for residents reduced

Three Score Club and Wingate Golden Oldies

Organisation Description

The Three Score Club and Wingate Golden Oldies are a group of elderly and retired residents on the Portsoken Ward and Mansell Street Estate. The club runs regular social gatherings, fish and chip suppers, organises educational talks and biannual outings to the seaside for its members. They also run a monthly chiropody clinic.



Funds Utilised For:

- Coach trip and entrance to Woburn Safari Park
- Provisions of fish and chip suppers

- Coach trips to Colchester, Broadstairs and Kent for members
- Christmas Party for members
- Trip on the Bluebell railway
- Cinema evening for members

Project Co-ordinator's Report

The Project Co-ordinator reported that the funds allowed the Golden Oldies and Three Score Club the opportunity to take elderly residents on a number of fantastic outings and holidays including a trip to the seaside. He underlined that without these funds these activities simply would not have taken place and that they make a big difference to the emotional wellbeing of residents as well as developing community spirit and cohesion.

The funding reached over twenty five local elderly people aged between sixty and ninety.

Project Participant's Report

One resident who takes part has lived on the Mansell Estate for twenty eight years and loves the fact that the clubs offer her the opportunity to remain an active part of her community now that she has retired and thus has less obvious ways to get out and about and interact. Another resident states that the clubs help him to feel proud of the area he lives in and the community to which he belongs.

City of London Strategic Aims Met

1. Residents feeling safer in their community
2. Residents living healthier and more active lifestyles
3. Supporting and enhancing quality of life for elderly residents
4. Forming part of the City's early intervention strategy

Craft and Conversation

Organisation Description

Craft and Conversation does what it says on the tin. It is a weekly knitting club for City residents and others, held at the Barbican, which offers them a space and a forum to socialise and to share and develop craft skills and interests.

Funds Utilised For:

- Wool for residents to take part in knitting
- Summer group outing for club members

Project Co-ordinator's Report

The Co-ordinator pointed out that the project not only provides social and community activity for residents. The organisation serve a dual positive purpose in that they largely create and provide warm clothing for charitable organisations to hand on to people in need. She was keen to point out that the club welcomes all comers and is hoping to grow over time in size.

Project Participant's Report

A seventy year old participant started that involvement in the project has given her pride in her local community, has lessened feelings of isolation or her, and has helped her learn new craft making skills. For her the best part about the experience is "being part of a team" and the shared bonding and friendship that goes along with it. She also underlines the fact that some of the things that they make are donated to worthy causes in the area.

City of London Strategic Aims Met

1. Elderly and isolated residents supported
2. Benefitting minority or disadvantaged groups
3. Residents developing or learning new skills

Edible Golden Lane

Organisation Description

Edible Golden Lane grows fruit and vegetables in soil bags to provide food for local residents and to act as a gardening club that residents can get involve with in order to meet each other and enjoy growing plants and food. They also provide a programme of events for the wider community.



Funds Utilised For:

- Purchase of several water butts
- Purchase of planters for growing fruit and vegetables
- Purchase and delivery of soil
- Cables and trellis for community gardens
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Project Co-ordinator's Report

The Co-ordinator reports that the funds enabled them to broaden the scheme by purchasing vital new gardening and growing equipment to create new areas for community planting so in effect increased the capacity of the project. They report that the project reaches all ages and social groups in the community and that it gives priority to residents with no access to an outside space or garden to allow them the opportunity for some greenery and space.

Project Participant's Report

Participants report that they have been able to work together to build the planters and develop the community areas. It has allowed them greater interaction and to develop new friendships with other local people. It has also allowed them to take on new members and participants. Several members report that they feel their health and wellbeing have been directly positively affected by the project.

City of London Strategic Aims Met

1. Residents leading active and healthy lifestyles
2. Residents having pride in their community
3. Residents developing or learning new skills
4. Elderly and isolated residents supported

Barbican Art Society

Organisation Description

The Barbican Art Society is a small art charity which maintains a dedicated art room for the benefit of City residents to participate and learn and develop an interest in the arts.



Funds Utilised For:

- Covering basic core costs like council tax, rent and insurance.
- Running a fund raising and awareness exhibition.

Project Co-ordinator's Report

The Co-ordinator reports that elderly and disabled members have been particularly sought out and offered involvement and engagement with the society. Five separate classes each comprising eight students benefited through provision of the grant. The grant also enabled promotion and art education through an event. He reports also that the funds have allowed them to expand their work and find more students with disabilities to get involved in their art projects.

Project Participant's Report

A fifty eight year old project participant reported that she enjoys both the aspects of art tuition and also the opportunity to meet and socialise with other residents through those activities. She also underlines the fact that she is disabled and has limited opportunities in some respects but that this project is one she can easily take part in and is very appreciative of that.

She feels that the project has given her new friends and "built confidence and enabled me to be independent"

City of London Strategic Aims Met

1. Residents leading active and healthier lifestyles
2. Residents having a pride in their community
3. Elderly and isolated groups supported
4. Residents developing or learning new skills
5. Increase in intergenerational activity
6. Promoting opportunities for young people
7. Promoting the work of the City of London

Elder's Voice – City Carers Day Out

Organisation Description

Elders Voice works with and for older people and carers in the City of London to provide support, services and opportunities for them to remain active and independent members of their communities.



Funds Utilised For:

- Cruise on the Thames for carers
- Lunch on the Thames for carers
- Respite stand-in care to cover absence for the participants

Project Co-ordinator's Report

The Co-ordinator reports that the funds were used to provide a respite day for fifteen full-time City Carers who reported that they were feeling socially isolated and stressed and would benefit from a day's respite from their usual care duties. It also gave them the opportunity to meet and socialise with other carers in similar situations so that they could share experiences and learn from each other.

She also reports that funding has helped increase numbers of carers attending monthly support group meetings where they can socialise and hear talks on related subjects from a range of guest speakers.

Project Participant's Report

The following were comments made by participants on the project outing:

"Thank you so much for a delightful 'outing' I really enjoyed the day. The food was excellent & so nice to meet everyone socially."

"It was a super day. We enjoyed the scenery and the service was good".

"The trip was wonderful"

City of London Strategic Aims Met

1. Residents leading healthy and active lifestyles
2. Elderly and isolated residents supported
3. Benefiting minority or disadvantaged groups
4. Risk of future problems reduced

Older People's Reference Group City and Hackney

Organisation Description

The City and Hackney Older People's Reference Group gives a voice and a regular forum and meeting point to elderly people in the design and delivery of healthcare services delivered by the City of London (and Hackney).



Funds Utilised For:

- Purchase of a portable PA system for the group

Project Co-ordinator's Report

The Project Co-ordinator reports that the funds effectively reached over two hundred people attending their meetings over the course of a year. It allowed them to purchase a portable PA system which meant they could be much more flexible in where they held their meetings. This in turn provides greater community involvement and participation in their group. It has also helped elderly people function more effectively at meetings as they can now speak and hear properly whereas there were issues with these areas in the past.

Project Participant's Report

A seventy four year old retired doctor and project participant reports that the project offers her the opportunity to use her professional knowledge and experience of being a service user in order to help inform policy and planning around healthcare in the City. It also means she is able to inform and support other elderly residents regarding local healthcare provision and opportunities. She reports that she feels "much more active and mentally stimulated" through participating in the project and that "my networks have expanded greatly". Also that it has provided her with close friendships and helped her learn and develop new skills.

She also reports that the addition of the PA system which the grant funds paid for has not only been of massive benefit at meetings already, but will yield major savings in the short and longer-term because the project no longer has to rely on hiring expensive meeting venues with integrated sound systems.

City of London Strategic Aims Met

1. Residents leading active and healthy lifestyles
2. Elderly and isolated residents supported
3. Risk of future problems for residents reduced
4. Promoting the work of the City of London

Friends of City Gardens

Funds Utilised For

- Community event venue hire
- Publicity and marketing
- Events and marketing materials
- Refreshments for the event

Organisation Description

Friends of City Gardens aim to provide activities in all of the gardens and green spaces across the City of London Borough and they develop and utilise links with food growing groups on residential estates throughout the City. They work with both adults and children and in partnership with Toynbee Hall and the St Luke's Community Centre to provide gardening activities for more elderly residents of the City.



Project Co-ordinator Report

The Co-ordinator noted that the small grant allowed the project to reach between three and four hundred people in a year by funding local community festivals which offered local people a chance to take part and get signposting to services and activities around the Borough. The events were also used to educate residents about nutrition and healthy eating lifestyles and there was storytelling and nutrition education for children too. Free plants and vegetables were provided to residents to encourage vegetable growing.

The funding helped them “engage all sectors of the City community in enjoyable and inclusive activities with the focus of using the City’s gardens more and passing on skills in growing plants, maintaining gardens and promoting healthy living.”

Intergenerational contact has increased as a result of the project as has participation in general by families and children.

Project Participants Report

Participants reported that they were consulted to gather opinion about how to steer the project over the next few years and what residents would like to see in City Gardens in general. They were also appreciative of health education aspects of the events and the provision of free fruit and vegetables and advice about growing their own.

Residents also report that they are engaging in more social interaction with other project members and visiting each others gardens and green spaces more often in order to learn and to socialise. It has also allowed them the opportunity to mix with and meet residents from other estates, which is not something they have had much experience in previously.

Strategic Aims Met

1. Residents feeling safer in their community
2. Residents leading active and healthy lifestyles
3. Residents having pride in their community
4. Elderly and isolated residents supported
5. Residents developing or learning new skills
6. Increase in intergenerational activity
7. Promoting opportunities for young people
8. Promoting the work of the City of London

Strictly Stylish Sequence Dancers

Funds Utilised For

- Forty sessions of venue hire for the dancers

Organisation Description

The group provides dance classes and tuition for senior citizens and also offers them the opportunity for regular socialising and community activity. They are hoping to extend the group to include members of all ages and encourage intergenerational activity.



Project Co-ordinator Report

The Co-ordinator reports that more than fifty local residents took part in the activities over the course of the year and that the club helps its members combat isolation and enjoy a regular social and healthy activity in a safe and comfortable environment.

“People who have been socially isolated due to illness or bereavement are re-entering the social scene. Members (especially elderly) have improved memory skills and feeling of physical and emotional wellbeing.”

They also report a significant increase in membership due to the stability offered by the provision of the small grant, and now have five times as many members as they did a couple of years ago.

Project Participants Report

A regular seventy one year old participant in the dancing group reported that they felt more healthy and active through their involvement, that they had learned enjoyable new skills and gained a new interest, and has encouraged them to mix much more with people in their local community.

“I think it’s a great idea and the retired people who attend obviously enjoy it. The dance and social aspects are very good.”

Strategic Aims Met

1. Residents leading healthier and more active lifestyles
2. Elderly and isolated residents supported
3. Residents developing or learning new skills
4. Risk of future problems for residents reduced
5. Increase in intergenerational activity

City Gateway – Substance Misuse Support

Funds Utilised For

- Sessional speakers for a number of talks and events
- Resources for youth workshops
- Premises hire for workshops

Organisation Description

City Gateway is a charity that aims to address the economic inequalities in the City of London and Tower Hamlets area by connecting with disadvantaged and vulnerable young people, running training and other educational programmes to give them skills and access to greater education and employment opportunities.



Project Report

More than one in ten NEET young people are driven to drugs and alcohol as a result of unemployment (OECD, 2008). Youth crime also increases as a direct, result, seriously undermining a young person's future prospects.

The small grants funding was used to enable the delivery of a programme of targeted support to young people in the City of London around the issue of substance misuse. They will support young people through many issues on their journey to Adulthood.

Project Participants Report

“Teacher’s at City Gateway actually care about your wellbeing, what you want to do and are very supportive, whenever you need them the staff are there for you.”

“City Gateway give young people whatever their background a chance and help us build a bright future. If it wasn’t for City Gateway I would be stuck in a corner somewhere, but now I am an apprentice”

Strategic Aims Met

1. Residents feeling safer in their community
2. Residents leading healthier and more active lifestyles
3. Risk of future problems for residents reduced
4. Benefiting minority and economically disadvantaged groups
5. Providing opportunities for young people

Aldgate East Residents Association Online Access Centre

Funds Utilised For

- Provision of broadband hub and IT equipment
- Insurance for equipment / software etc
- Online access equipment for residents such as 'dongles'

Organisation Description

This project was set up specifically to provide online access for Mansell Street residents, many of whom do not have access to the internet at home. The project will then seek to encourage the use of the internet for activities such as job hunting, homework clubs and skills exchange and IT teaching facilities.



Strategic Aims Met

1. Residents leading more active and healthier lifestyles
2. Residents learning and developing new skills
3. Risk of future problems for residents reduced
4. Increase in intergenerational activity
5. Benefiting minority or disadvantaged groups
6. Promoting opportunities for young people