

MEETING: 21/03/2019

Ref: 15217

ASSESSMENT CATEGORY: Bridging Divides - Connecting the Capital

Myatt's Fields Park Project

**Adv: Sandra Jones
Base: Lambeth
Benefit: Lambeth and
Southwark**

**Amount requested: £229,102
(Revised request: £249,194)
Amount recommended: £249,200)**

The Applicant

Myatt's Fields Park was opened in 1889 and has survived as a smaller scale Victorian Park and retains many of its original features including the layout of the paths, some of the flowerbeds, the bandstand and the roundhouse. The park is in an area of Lambeth with high levels of deprivation. In 2002 Myatt's Fields Park Project (MFPP) was established as a charitable company with the vision of reviving the historic buildings and landscape as well as improving play and sports facilities, with the restoration being funded through a £3m grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund and Lambeth Council.

MFPP runs several programmes and events to attract and involve local people in the development of the park and neighbourhood. Regular activities include a food hub with community kitchen and greenhouse, preschool and family activities, community gardening, foodbank, volunteering opportunities and community events focusing on music and food. MFPP nurtures neighbourhood networks. They also partner a local organisation in supporting homeless people to learn new skills around gardening.

The Application

MFPP is seeking support for five years towards a Volunteering Programme which enables local people of all ages and abilities to participate in well-being gardening, healthy eating and social events. This will be done through a part-time (14 hours per week) volunteer co-ordinator, a community gardener (21 hours per week) and associated running costs. Project costs were reviewed at the assessment meeting and have increased as the initial bid reduced running costs year on year. These are now the same year on year, with an increase in volunteer expenses.

The Recommendation

MFPP is a trusted charity which has been working with a range of individuals to participate in well-being gardening, healthy eating and social events. The volunteers are supported to take part of a range of activities in maintaining the park as well as the activities that happen within the park. The project has strong evidence of positive impact on the participants and fits well with your priorities of Londoners experiencing inequality or disadvantage having greater wellbeing and independence through improved access to community facilities. During the assessment visit your officer discussed with the organisation why the contribution towards the running costs decreased year on year and this was due to a misunderstanding around your core cost funding, which this application is not. They have also increased volunteer costs to cover costs such as protective clothing and, where appropriate, subsistence.

£249,200 over five years (£49,700; £49,700; £49,800; £50,000; £50,000) towards a part-time (14 hours per week) Volunteer Co-ordinator, a Community Gardener (21 hours per week) and associated running costs.

Funding History

Meeting Date	Decision
13/02/2013	£50,000 over two years (£24,000; £26,000) for the salary of a part-time (21 hpw) Community Gardener and running costs to develop local food growing projects in north Lambeth and Southwark.

Background and detail of proposal

The roles of the two staff members are complementary, both working with volunteers. The community gardener will run a horticultural volunteering programme in the greenhouse and park to support a network of local food growing projects with seedlings and giving them advice, developing MFPP's Edible Park and new Physic Garden spaces. The volunteer co-ordinator will also support the horticultural well-being gardening volunteers in the park and greenhouse, work with the network of food growers and build relationships with other local organisations to expand the work of MFPP to expand and support volunteering, engaging with a wide range of people and improve their health and well-being.

Financial Information

To date the organisation has not included the cost of raising funds within their accounts as this is included in the salaries of the current staff. Your officer has explained this and they sought advice on how best to represent this in the future. This is included for the 2019 and 2020 budgets.

The charity holds reserves just over its reserves policy of three months of turnover. Year on year they show a slight increase in income from a range of sources, with a small reliance on statutory funding; this is a conscious decision made by the Trustees and will continue going forward.

Year end as at 31 July	2018 Examined Accounts £	2019 Budget £	2020 Forecast £
Income & expenditure:			
Income	144,284	158,772	187,405
- % of Income confirmed as at 22/02/2019	n/a	n/a	52%
Expenditure	(171,500)	(151,313)	(192,188)
Total surplus/(deficit)	(27,216)	7,459	(4,783)
Split between:			
- Restricted surplus/(deficit)	9,034	15,202	(9,843)
- Unrestricted surplus/(deficit)	(36,250)	(7,743)	5,060
	(27,216)	7,459	(4,783)
Cost of Raising Funds	0	5,000	5,000
- % of Income	0.0%	3.1%	2.7%
Total expenditure	171,500	151,313	192,188
Free unrestricted reserves:			
Free unrestricted reserves held at year end	53,859	46,116	51,176
No of months of operating expenditure	3.8	3.7	3.2
Reserves policy target	42,875	37,828	48,047
No of months of operating expenditure	3.0	3.0	3.0
Free reserves over/(under) target	10,984	8,288	3,129