

APPENDIX 2 - CIL NEIGHBOURHOOD FUND

**Bevis Marks Synagogue Heritage Foundation
(ref.18025)**

Amount requested: £240,000

Amount recommended: £240,000

Purpose of grant request: Improve access, interpretation and functionality to ensure Bevis Marks is fit for purpose as a historic attraction and cultural centre with a dynamic activity programme

Type of cost: Mixture of revenue & capital

Ward(s) benefitting: *All Wards*

The Applicant

Bevis Marks Synagogue (BMS) has been part of the multi-faith cultural landscape of the City of London for over 300 years. Their history is intertwined within the City of London: they maintain collections and archives that offer a valuable insight into the history of London, life in the City and acceptance of nonconformist religion in England. BMS is the oldest synagogue in Europe that is still in operation and regular services are held in the Grade I listed building.

Background and detail of proposal

BMS has been an important part of the community for hundreds of years and like many Places of Worship it has an ageing congregation and accessibility in the widest sense needs addressing. Bevis Marks Synagogue Heritage Foundation has submitted a proposal for funding that will contribute to an overall project which will address the backlog of work required on BMS and improve accessibility, interpretation, collection displays and functionality to ensure that BMS can continue to serve communities as an historic attraction and cultural centre.

BMS is currently undergoing a transformation programme that will see several new staff join to bolster the Charity's operations and heritage management. A formal and informal educational offering plays an important part of this programme along with multi-faith projects which will contribute to an understanding of the Sephardi community and work towards reducing anti-Semitic views and misconceptions.

Bevis Marks Synagogue Heritage Foundation have applied for a total of £240,000 from the CILNF to help deliver multiple strands of this work over four years. From the amount requested, a total of £140,000 will support the cost of capital work to the synagogue, annexe and courtyard. Bevis Marks Synagogue Heritage Foundation have already sought the advice of a professional access consultant and this work will provide a range of accessibility improvements such as lift and ramp access. The rest of the funding that has been requested (£100,000) will contribute to the salary costs of a 'Community Officer' over the course of four years (£70,000), some community outreach and educational programmes (£20,000) and a temporary

exhibition about BMS and the Sephardi community that will take place in Guildhall (£10,000).

Bevis Marks Synagogue Heritage Foundation have supplied a significant amount of additional information about the range of activities that they wish to deliver with the support of the CILNF. These include an oral history project; a community music project in partnership with Spitalfields Music; an exhibition at Guildhall Art Gallery; community events linked to the City of London and Aldgate Partnership; various volunteering activities and participation in inter-faith weeks. All of this will help feed into the creation of a programme of educational outreach with schools.

This programme of activities will dovetail with the capital restorative works to BMS and improvement of accessibility in its built environment that has already received planning permission and Listed Building consent. This will support a diverse range of people and communities to access this important cultural landmark in the City.

Financial Information

Whilst Bevis Marks Synagogue is a very old institution, the applicant for funding (Bevis Marks Synagogue Heritage Foundation) is a relatively new organisation that was set up in 2019 for the purpose of raising funds to deliver a programme of restorative works to the Grade I listed building alongside a programme of community education. Whilst the Bevis Marks Synagogue Heritage Foundation has a limited filing history, it has been able to provide its first 18 months of accounts which demonstrate an ability to manage sizable amounts of grant funding.

It is important to note that whilst the Bevis Marks Synagogue Heritage Foundation is technically a new organisation, it has been set up by an existing organisation (ICW The Spanish and Portuguese Jews Synagogue, charity number 212517) which has a long history of good governance and financial controls.

The income that Bevis Marks Synagogue Heritage Foundation has managed to secure in its first year of operation and their projections for the next financial year, including £2.5m of confirmed income from the National Lottery Heritage Foundation and the Weisz Foundation, indicate an organisation that is on a stable financial footing and the financial controls outlined in their governance documents follow recognised good practice.

It is worth noting that Bevis Marks Synagogue Heritage Foundation has no formal reserves policy as it currently operates on a 'spend-out' model where all funds raised are allocated directly to the cost of restorative works to the synagogue. The applicant has very low operational costs: the primary expenditure is for the fundraising function of the organisation which is provided on a freelance contracted basis. The rest of their operational needs are met by in-kind support from the synagogue itself, which provides operational space and volunteer capacity. It is for these reasons that Bevis Marks Synagogue Heritage Foundation does not currently have a formal reserves policy. Should this grant be approved, we would expect them to adopt a formal reserves policy to ensure they have sufficient resources to fulfil the service-delivery elements of the proposal: this should not prove to be a contentious issue with the applicant.

Year end as at 31/10	2020	2021
	18 month draft accounts	Forecast
	£	£
Income & expenditure:		
Income	926,482	2,863,949
- % of Income confirmed as at	100%	52%
Expenditure	386,105	3,357,940
Total surplus/(deficit)	540,377	(493,991)
Split between:		
- Restricted surplus/(deficit)	540,377	(493,991)
- Unrestricted surplus/(deficit)	0	0
	540,377	(493,991)
Cost of Raising Funds (Total)	122,845	83,000
% Income	13%	3%
Operating Expenditure (unrestricted)	263,260	3,274,940
Free unrestricted reserves:		
Free unrestricted reserves held at year end	540,377	46,386
No of months of operating expenditure	24.6	0.2
Reserves policy target	0	0
No of months of operating expenditure	0.0	0.0
Free reserves over/(under) target	540,377	46,386

Recommendation

This is an impressive application from an important historic and cultural asset to the City. The funding requested represents a small contribution to the overall budget for this work, which has been costed at £6.5m. Based on the accounts seen thus far, there can be a level of confidence that Bevis Marks Synagogue Heritage Foundation will achieve this target. It is clear that careful planning has gone into the proposed programme of activities and the goals are realistic and achievable. The recommendation is for this application to be fully funded over four years.

£240,000 over four years (£130,000; £70,000; £20,000; £20,000) towards the salary of a Community Officer, a programme of community outreach and the cost of restorative work and access improvements.