

Committee(s)	Dated:
Open Spaces and City Gardens Committee	27 April 2021
Subject: Award of Funding 2020-21: Enjoying Green Spaces and the Natural Environment	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	2,4,9,10,11,12
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	No
If so, how much?	N/A
What is the source of Funding?	
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?	
Report of: Director Open Spaces	For Information
Report author: Gerry Kiefer, Open Spaces Business Manager	

Summary

The *Enjoying Green Spaces and the Natural Environment* funding theme, which forms part of the Central Grants Programme, was initiated in October 2016 and last reviewed by this Committee in 2019. It offers community, voluntary and charitable groups an opportunity to apply for up to £15k funding for projects where most of the impact will be on the City of London Corporation's (COL's) green spaces.

Despite COVID19 impacting on community work, eight applications were received. Following grant assessment and due diligence checks by the City's Central Grants Unit (CGU) which oversees the scheme a group of expert officers reviewed the submissions and recommended seven applications with a value of £83.5k. The Chairman and Deputy Chairman of this Committee approved the allocation of funding under delegated authority

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked:

- To note the report.

Main Report

Background

1. The *Enjoying Green Spaces and the Natural Environment* grant funding stream is managed by the CoL's CGU.
2. This grant scheme awards funding between £2,000 and £15,000 (£20,000 in exceptional circumstances) to community, voluntary and charitable groups under 4 sub themes:

- a) Connecting communities with their green spaces
 - b) Improving the conservation value of the green spaces
 - c) Improving our knowledge of the biodiversity of the green spaces
 - d) Improving mental health, through the use of green spaces
3. Full eligibility criteria for this funding theme is available on the City of London Corporation's website: <https://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/about-us/working-with-community/central-grants-programme/enjoying-green-spaces-and-the-natural-environment>
 4. Your Committee delegated authority to the Town Clerk, in consultation with your Chairman and Deputy Chairman to agree the award of grants.
 5. A communications plan was developed which included production of a poster which was displayed across the Open Spaces sites and to Open Spaces staff, social media posts and information sent to local organisations.
 6. Applications and applicant organisations underwent due diligence checks by the CGU to ensure compliance with the established eligibility criteria and a financial assessment.

Current Position

7. Up to £84,000 was available to award and eight submissions were received with a total funding request of £96,894. All eligible applications were reviewed and assessed by Open Spaces Director and Senior Officers.
8. The funding recommendations were approved by the Chairman and Deputy Chairman under delegated authority.
9. Grant funding was awarded to seven organisations for projects across the Open Spaces with a total award of £83,545. The groups awarded funding and a summary of their projects are detailed in the table below.

Division	Group	Award £	Project summary
The Commons	Buckinghamshire Fungus Group	£9,700	A new scientific framework for studying the fungal biodiversity of Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common through specimen collection and analysis.
The Commons	Downlands Trust	£14,988	Practical volunteer task days at four City Commons, including grazing at Riddlesdown Quarry, to enhance biodiversity.
City Gardens	Friends of City Gardens	£11,800	Delivery of habitat enhancement, training of community volunteers, biodiversity surveys and data recording to support the City's Biodiversity Strategy
Epping Forest	The Friends of Wanstead Park	£4,100	Provision of directional signage within the Park to help users navigate to

			historic features, lakes, facilities, entrances and exits.
Epping Forest	Epping Forest Heritage Trust	£14,053	Enable London's communities to discover and access Epping Forest through the historic long distance 'Centenary Walk' and signage at Epping and Loughton stations directing people to the Forest.
Epping Forest	Heritage of London Trust Ltd	£14,000	Restoration of the historic landing stage of Wanstead Grotto which is at risk of collapse
Epping Forest	Rare Breeds Survival Trust	£14,904	Using innovative cattle GPS collars to undertake precision grazing on City of London's internationally important habitats to enrich biodiversity and share the learning nationally.

10. The funding was oversubscribed by £12,894. One submission was not recommended for funding. This organisation was offered feedback on their submission.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

Corporate Plan 2018 – 2023

11. The *Enjoying Green Spaces and the Natural Environment* funding stream helps deliver the following Corporate Plan 2018-2023 aims and outcomes:

Contribute to a flourishing society

- 2. People enjoy good health and wellbeing.
- 4. Communities are cohesive and have the facilities they need

Shape outstanding environments

- 9. We are digitally and physically well-connected and responsive
- 10. We inspire enterprise, excellence, creativity and collaboration
- 11. We have clean air, land and water and a thriving and sustainable natural environment.
- 12. Our spaces are secure, resilient and well-maintained

12. The grant aid also supports all the Department's business plan main objectives:

- A. Open spaces and historic sites are thriving and accessible
- B. Spaces enrich people's lives
- C. Business practices are responsible and sustainable.

Finance

13. An award budget of £84,000 was available for 2021/22. The total funding awarded is £83,545.

Conclusion

14. This report and appendix provide a summary of the grant applications received in 2020/21 under the theme: Enjoying Green Spaces and the Natural Environment. Seven groups were awarded funding totalling nearly £84k for projects that will take place in Epping Forest, The Commons and in City Gardens.

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