

Report of: Executive Member for Community Development

Meeting of:	Date	Agenda item	Ward(s)
Voluntary and Community Sector Committee	30 March 2021		All

SUBJECT: Islington Council's Community Chest: Round One Grant Awards 2020/21**1 Synopsis**

- 1.1 Small voluntary and community organisations play an important role in Islington, helping to build community resilience and supporting residents who are experiencing poverty and isolation. Islington Council's Community Chest (ICCC), one of the borough's most popular grant programmes, has proved to be a very effective way of funding grassroots activity and developing the capacity of local groups.
- 1.2 This report sets out the organisations approved by Islington Council's Community Chest Panel for the first round of funding for 2020/21, which took place in June 2020.

2 Recommendation

- 2.1 To note the funding decisions made by Islington Council's Community Chest Panel in relation to the first round of ICCC grant funding for 2020/21, as set out in Appendix 1. This is for information only.

3 Background

- 3.1 ICCC is a partnership between Islington Council and Cripplegate Foundation. It is a small grants programme that funds grassroots activity and brings additional capacity building, networking and developmental support to local voluntary and community organisations. By providing resources for local groups ICCC helps to build community resilience and to tackle poverty and isolation.

- 3.2 ICCC is available to local organisations with a turnover of no more than £100,000 per year – in most cases less than £50,000 per year. Organisations can apply for one grant of up to £5,000 per year. The priority is to support applications from the most deprived areas of the borough with a focus on the following thematic areas:
- Advise and support people
 - Educating people and improving their skills and employability
 - Improving people’s mental and/or physical health
 - Improving the local environment and making communities safer
 - Reduce isolation and increasing people’s involvement in the community
- 3.3 Under current grant funding arrangements, agreed by the VCS Committee in March 2015, the Council provides funding of £200,000 per year and Cripplegate Foundation adds £50,000 per year (from which £36,000 per year is deducted to cover the costs of administering and developing the programme).
- 3.4 Applications to the ICCC are considered by the Islington Council Community Chest Panel (ICCCP), which meets three times a year. The ICCCP is Chaired by the Executive Member for Community Development and consists of two nominated ward Councillors, representatives from Cripplegate Foundation and representatives from the Voluntary and Community Sector, nominated by the Islington Community Network.
- 3.5 The ICCCP also considers issues of wider relevance to the local voluntary and community sector and reviews priorities annually to ensure that the programme continues to meet the needs of Islington’s most vulnerable and isolated residents. In addition, panellists track application trends and identify any gaps in the programme that should be addressed.
- 3.6 In April 2017 VCS Committee decided to transfer full responsibility to ICCCP regarding confirming the awarding of grants to VCS Organisations, rather than being required to decide on recommendations made by the panel. This change has helped to streamline the decision making process and reduce delays in notifying VCS organisations of the outcome of their applications. The Council’s interests are protected by having the Executive Member for Community Development as Chairperson of the ICCCP. The VCS Committee continues to receive reports to note decisions made by ICCCP in respect of awards through the programme. However, the Council has reserved the right to adjust this arrangement if deemed necessary.
- 3.7 To note £3,500 was reimbursed into the ICCC funding pot as a result of a reduction in the amount of funding requested by a previous application and a further £2,025 was reimbursed from a group that ceased operation. This provided an additional £5,525 to carry over into the round 1 funding round for the 2019/20 year. A further historic underspend of £35,974 was identified through a Cripplegate audit. It was agreed to divide this equally into each round for the 2019/20 year (£11,991 per round) with any year end underspend rolled over into the current financial year (2020/21).
- 3.8 Therefore, for this round of ICCC funding for year 2020/21 it has been noted that an underspend of £3,117 has been carried over from round 3 of year 2019/20 into round 1 of 2020/21.

4 Round One Grant Awards 2020/21

- 4.1 The first round of ICCC was widely advertised to local groups through voluntary sector networks and forums, tenants and residents' associations, and on the Cripplegate Foundation website. Information sessions were arranged for organisations interested in applying to the programme.
- 4.2 A total of 23 applications for funding were received in this round. Two applications were ineligible for funding and were therefore withdrawn, leaving a total of 21 applications for the Panel to consider, requesting a total of £93,487. Six applications for consideration were from first-time applicants. Two of the recommended applications were from groups that have not previously received funding.
- 4.3 The ICCCP met on 30 June 2020 to consider applications and approved awards totalling £74,650 to 16 projects. A list of organisations recommended for funding and the proposed grant award for each organisation is set out in Appendix 1.

5 Implications

5.1 Financial implications:

- 5.1.1 The Council's grant funding of £200,000 per year referred to in this report has been met from existing budgets allocated to ICCC in the Housing General Fund.
- 5.1.2 At the start of FY20/21 the total sum available for distribution in grants by Cripplegate was £217,117. Grant awards in Round 1 totalled £74,650, leaving £142,467 remaining in FY20/21.

5.2 Legal Implications:

- 5.2.1 The Council has power to provide grants for the voluntary and community sector under the General Power of Competence set out in Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011. The provision of grants for the voluntary and community sector as described in this report is not subject to any other statutory provision. In providing these grants the council must ensure that it complies with its duty to secure best value (Section 3 of the Local Government Act 1999) and the fiduciary duty to council tax payers.

5.3 Environmental Implications and contribution to achieving a net zero carbon Islington by 2030

- 5.3.1 Several of the projects funded by the ICCC grants will have carbon and environmental impacts. These include energy use in buildings, purchase of food and materials, printing and the generation of waste, as well as travel-related impacts including vehicular emissions and contributing to congestion.
- 5.3.2 However, due to the Covid 19 outbreak and social distancing measures in place, many centres and offices have been closed and activities are taking place online or digitally. This will reduce the impact on the environment as there will be less travelling to events and less use of resources as detailed above, when delivering projects.

5.4 Resident Impact Assessment:

- 5.4.1 The Council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and to advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations, between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it (section 149 Equality Act 2010). The Council has a duty to have due regard to the need to remove or minimise disadvantages, take steps to meet needs, in particular steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities, and encourage people to participate in public life. The Council must have due regard to the need to tackle prejudice and promote understanding.
- 5.4.2 ICCC provides resources for small community organisations, many of which are volunteer-led and wouldn't meet the criteria for funding under other programmes. It enables some of Islington's poorest residents to access community-based services and activities including through newly established groups who offer the potential for adding to existing provision locally or who can reach communities that may not otherwise be supported. Analysis of previous grants demonstrates ICCC's success at meeting the needs of groups with protected characteristics, for example people from black and minority ethnic and refugee backgrounds, young people and older people, women, and people with disabilities.

6 Conclusions

- 6.1 ICCC helps to nurture and sustain an innovative and resilient voluntary and community sector in Islington, in particular providing resources for smaller organisations that find it hard to access funding from other programmes. ICCC is an effective way of developing grass roots activity across the borough and building capacity in local organisations to support residents who are experiencing poverty and isolation.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Approved Grant Awards for ICCC: Round One 2020/21 - For information only

Background papers: none

Final report clearance:

Signed by:



Cllr Una O'Halloran
Executive Member for Community Development

Date: 15 March 2021

Report Author: Shabana Aslam
Tel: 020 7527 3848
Email: shabana.aslam@islington.gov.uk

Financial Implications: Thomas Cooksey
Tel: 020 7527 1867
Email: Thomas.Cooksey@islington.gov.uk

Legal Implications: Sonal Mistry
Tel: 020 7527 3833
Email: Sonal.Mistry@islington.gov.uk

Environmental Implications: James Wilson
Tel: 020 2527 2349
Email: James.Wilson@Islington.gov.uk

Islington Council Community Chest Round One Awards 2020/21

Organisation	Project / Activity	Grant Award (£)
Advise and Support People		
Community Language Support Services	Helps to improve the lives and integration of vulnerable refugees	£5,000
Jigsaw GC	Get Connected programme	£5,000
Improve people's mental and/or physical health		
Memory Gardens	Hand and Sky Project	£5,000
Sarah Agnes Foundation	Empowering Single parents	£4,900
Autism Hub Islington	Partners for Health Autism Post Diagnostic Project	£5,000
Isledon Wolves Youth Football Club	Resumption of football and additional training	£1,500
SLOW	Surviving the Loss of Your World Bereavement Support	£10,000
Reduce isolation and increase people's involvement in the community		
Angel Community Canal Boat Trust	Angel Boat 'Isolated and Elderly' Project 2020/21	£2,500
Life Chances	Reducing Social Isolation for the elderly and the disabled	£4,850
Speak Street	Learning English through Londoners	£5,000
South Islington Stroke Club	Stroke Club lunch and activities for stroke survivors and carers	£3,900
Artbox London	Subsidised art workshops and social support for people with learning disabilities/autism	£5,000
Aphasia Re-Connect	Aphasia New Groups	£2,000
Educate people and improve their skills and employability		
Head Held High	"The Best you"	£5,000
Somali Education Centre	Somali Education Supplementary school Project	£5,000
Light Project Pro International	Global Skills Project	£5,000
	Total	£74,650.00

