

Report of: Executive Member for Community Development

Meeting of:	Date	Agenda item	Ward(s)
Voluntary and Community Sector Committee	25 January 2022		All

SUBJECT: Islington Council's Community Chest: Round One Grant Awards 2021/22**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's Panel for the first round of funding for 2021/22

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 2021/22, as set out in Appendix 1.

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 development 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:
- 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 Community Chest programmes in Islington have been successfully managed by Cripplegate Foundation for many years. Under current grant funding arrangements, agreed by 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). In addition, Cripplegate Foundation has committed up to £2,500 a year towards the costs of holding an annual celebration event to promote the achievements and impact of activity supported through ICCC.
- 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.

4 Round One Grant Awards 2021/22

- 4.1 A review of the number of ICCC applications and the proportion recommended for funding is undertaken in each round to track any significant rise or fall, or other issues that may affect the management or targeting of the programme. The number of applications considered in this round has picked up again following the dip in applications in the previous two rounds with is very encouraging as we begin to emerge out of substantial periods of lockdown over the past year. This acts as evidence of a resilient grass-roots community base in the borough.
- 4.2 In this round, applications have been received across all five of the funding priorities. However, it is interesting to note that as the number of applications have picked up, the two priority areas that traditionally retain the highest number of applications – Improving Physical and Mental Health and Reducing Isolation – but which attracted lower numbers of applications in the previous two rounds, have once again bounced back with nine and five applications received. Of the four remaining applications, two each were received under the Education and Improving Skills, and Employability and Improving the Environment and Making Communities Safer priority areas which again is consistent with historical trends.
- 4.3 21 applications for funding were received in this round, requesting a total of £98,561. One application was ineligible for funding (due to having already applied during the previous 12 months), leaving a total of 20 applications for the Panel to consider.
- 4.4 £82,790 is available to allocate (£71,334 plus £11,456 allocated from underspend from the previous round).
- 4.5 17 applications for consideration are recommended for funding totalling £81,515
- 4.6 Five (24%) of applications for consideration are from first-time applicants, two of which are recommended for funding.

5 Implications

5.1 Financial implications:

- 5.1.1 Due to the reduction in the number of applications over the past year an underspend from the 2020/21 budget of £34,369 was carried forward into the current 2021/22 year. This means that an additional £11,456 will be allocated to each of the three rounds this year and any underspend in any given round carried over into the next. The level of funding available for Round 1 were £82,790 which is made up of the initial £71,334 per round allocation and the £11,456 allocation from the previous year.

The Round 1 allocation has resulted in an underspend of £1,275. This will be rolled forward into the next round of funding.

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).

5.3 Environmental Implications

5.3.1 Several of the grants being awarded will fund activities with an environmental impact. These include purchase of materials and food, use of energy and water and travel by event attendees.

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 Conclusion and reasons for decision

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.

6.2 The amendment to the Council's current grant agreement with Cripplegate Foundation to transfer full responsibility to ICCCP has helped to streamline the decision-making process and reduce delays in notifying VCS organisations of the outcome of their applications. The Council's interest is protected by having the Executive Member for Community Development as Chairperson of the ICCCP. The VCS Committee will continue 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.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Approved Grant Awards for ICCC: Round One 2021/22

Background papers: none

Final report clearance:

Signed by:

Una O'Halloran

Cllr Una O'Halloran
Executive Member for Community Development

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Appendix 1:

Islington Council Community Chest: Round one Awards 2021/22

Recommended Awards For Islington Council's Community Chest

Organisation	Project / Activity	Proposed Grant Award (£)
Advise and Support People		
Community Language Support Services	Assist to improve the lives of vulnerable refugees	5,000.00
One True Voice	Emotional Health Network	5,000.00
Educate People and Improve their Skills and Employability		
Somali Education Centre	Face to Face Supplementary School Project	5,000.00
Turkish & Kurdish Children's Group	English, Maths and Turkish Classes	5,000.00
Improve the Environment and make Communities Safer		
HASHTAG UNAPOLOGETIC	More 2 Me	5,000.00
Improve People's Mental and / or Physical Health		
ASMARA FOOTBALL CLUB	ASAMRA FOOTBALL CLUB	5,000.00
Jigsaw-GC Community Interest Company	Get connected programme	5,000.00
Friends of Copenhagen	Zumba and Pilates classes with Healthy-Eating/Well-being/Cooking workshops with creche facility.	5,000.00
Amberliegh	Be The Best Version on You	10,000.00
Healthy Minds, Healthy Bods	Monthly Health Packs - plus weekly exercise sessions	3,485.00
Sarah Agnes Foundation	SAF Covid Recovery Support	4,150.00
FromRehabToLifeFoundation	Community Recovery	5,000.00
CARIS Islington	Adult and Children Bereavement Services	5,000.00

Reduce Isolation and Increase People's Involvement in the Community		
CONNAUGHT OPERA	CONNAUGHT ARE LIVE AGAIN!	5,000.00
Head Held High	High Society	5,000.00
EWT Theatre for the Community CIC	Estimated Waiting Time	1,050.00
Aphasia Re-Connect	Aphasia Reconnect Islington	2,830.00

81,515.00