

Report of: Executive Member for Community Development

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

SUBJECT: Islington Council's Community Chest: Round Two 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 second 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 second 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 Two Grant Awards 2021/22

- 4.1 The second round of ICCC was widely advertised through Voluntary Action Islington's e-news and Cripplegate Foundation's contacts and website as well as through the Council's electronic noticeboards. An email was also sent to all previous applicants from the past five years to raise awareness of the deadline and to encourage further applications. All ICCC publicity encourages groups to directly contact Cripplegate Foundation for an informal conversation prior to submitting an application. This approach works well, particularly with groups that are new to the programme, with eight (two of which were first-time applicants) making contact in advance. It is hoped this enables the submission of more focused applications and is reflected in the high proportion of good quality projects that can be recommended for funding.
- 4.2 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 considerably compared to the last three rounds which is very encouraging. This acts as evidence of a resilient grass-roots community base in the borough that is bouncing back and gearing up support now that things are opening up again. This is the second of three rounds for this year and the total number of applications already exceeds the total for the three rounds last year. It is to be noted that no applications were received under the category of Improving the local environment and making communities safer.
- 4.3 32 applications for funding were received in this round, requesting a total of £145,025. One application was ineligible for funding (due to having already applied during the previous 12 months) and one applicant withdrew leaving a total of 30 applications for the Panel to consider.
- 4.4 £84,065 is available to allocate (£71,334 plus £11,456 allocated from underspend from the previous year and £1,275 underspend from the previous round).
- 4.5 20 of the 30 applications for consideration are recommended for funding totalling £83,060. Nine (30%) of applications for consideration are from first-time applicants, three of which are recommended for funding.

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 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 current level of funds available for allocation in the current round is £84,065 which is made up of the initial £71,334 per round allocation, £11,456 allocation from the previous year underspend and £1,275 underspend from the previous round.

The Round 2 allocation has resulted in an underspend of £1,005. 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. However, some will have positive impacts that include improving biodiversity.

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 recommendation

- 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 Two 2021/22

Background papers: none

Final report clearance:

Signed by:

Una O'Halloran

Cllr Una O'Halloran
Executive Member for Community Development

Date: 20 January 2022

Report Author: Tony Robinson
Tel: 020 7527 3848 7631
Email: Tony.robinson@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

Appendix 1:

Islington Council Community Chest: Round Two Awards 2021/22

Recommended Awards For Islington Council's Community Chest

Round 2 2021/22: November 2021

Organisation	Project / Activity	Proposed Grant Award (£)
Advise and Support		
Bridging the Gap Mentoring	Helping people to rebuild lives after Covid	4,900.00
Stepping Stone4 (SS4)	Hope and back to community involvement	2,500.00
Educate People and Improve their Skills and Employability		
First Step Action	People's empowerment	4,970.00
Kurdish association for New Generations/Abroad (KANGA)	KANGA Supplementary Schools	4,960.00
Pop Up Poet	Powerful Pupils	2,500.00
Mer-IT digital	Work Experience for young people	5,000.00
Improve People's Mental and / or Physical Health		
Phoenix Pottery	Phoenix Pottery Community Class	5,000.00
Sports and Life Skills CIC	Islington rebuild	5,000.00
Women's Oneness Wellbeing (WOW)	Emergency Self-Care	2,170.00
Highbury Vale Blackstock Trust	Copenhagen Street Food Bank	5,000.00
Memory Cafe at Christ Church Highbury	Seated exercises at the Memory Cafe	3,750.00

Barrier Breakers Foundation	Soft Skills for Wellbeing at CANDI	4,920.00
Memory Gardens	Hand and Sky Project	4,950.00
Reduce Isolation and Increase People's Involvement in the Community		
Talking News Islington (TNI)	Talking Newspaper	1,500.00
SEN Family Saturdays	SEN Family Saturdays	5,000.00
Olden Community Garden	Olden Community Garden core activities	5,000.00
Islington People's Theatre CIC	Recoverist Theatre Project	4,040.00
South Islington Stroke Club	Stroke Club lunch and activities for stroke survivors and carers	4,300.00
AiR	Reverberations	2,600.00
Jannaty Women's Social Society	Nurture in Nature Summer Programme	5,000.00
		83,060.00