

Cultural Enrichment, Community Engagement and Wellbeing
The Laycock Centre, Laycock Street, London N1 1TH

Report of: Executive Member for Homes and Communities

Meeting of: Voluntary and Community Sector Committee

Date: 11 July 2022

Ward(s): All

Subject: Islington Community Festivals Fund Small Grants Programme 2023 - 2026

1. Synopsis

The Community Festivals Fund aims to support organisations based in Islington to deliver high quality, innovative, community focused festivals that are accessible to, and provide benefit for, residents across the borough and promote cultural benefit, stronger communities and partnership working.

- 1.1. At the Voluntary Community Sector Committee on 4 November 2019, it was agreed the Community Festivals Fund be changed from an annual open competition to a small grants programme, where applicants are commissioned by open competition on a three-year basis, subject to the budget being available year by year, yet still required to report annually on the previous year's activities.
- 1.2. In the event that the Community Festivals Fund is no longer affordable, the council is able to withdraw funding in the second and third years respectively.
- 1.3. The first round of Community Festivals funding under this three-year basis ran from April 2020 and ended in March 2023. Following a competitive application process, four festivals (WORD, Cally Festival, Whitecross Street Party and Angel Canal Festival) each received annual grant funding of £2,500 for the duration of the round.
- 1.4. A review of the 2020 – 2023 scheme informed the preparation and development for the second round of the Community Festivals Fund. There were slight revisions

to the selection and eligibility criteria whilst the overall format and framework remained broadly the same.

- 1.5. Under the Community Festivals Grants eligibility and selection criteria originally adopted in November 2019, the total funding available for this grant programme will be £10,000 per year, for the period of three consecutive years 2023 - 26, to deliver strategic arts-led community festivals and events that provide borough-wide benefit and will deliver against the council's equalities, place-shaping and community development agenda.
- 1.6. Festivals have been recommended for support from the Community Festivals Fund Small Grants Programme 2023 - 2026 based on the evidence provided by applicants that satisfactorily demonstrated and fulfilled the seven key criteria identified for the fund: cultural benefit, diversity and equality, value for money, inclusivity and accessibility, match funding and partnership, through well-managed festivals and event activities with borough-wide reach which meet the council's priorities.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. To approve the award of Community Festival Fund grants for 2023 – 2026 to the values requested for the festival proposals submitted by four organisations as outlined in the following table:

Name of Festival	Organisation	Ward (Main Event / Venue Location)	Festival Dates	Annual Funding Applied For	Annual Amount Recommended
WORD	All Change	Borough-wide	1-10 October 2023 Plus additional one-off events in Jun 23 and Mar 23 1- 10 October 2024 plus additional one-off events in Jun 24 and Mar 25 1-10 October 2025 plus additional one-off events in Jun 25 and Mar 26	£2,500	£2,500

Name of Festival	Organisation	Ward (Main Event / Venue Location)	Festival Dates	Annual Funding Applied For	Annual Amount Recommended
Cally Festival	Copenhagen Youth Project	Caledonian	2 July 2023 30 June 2024 29 June 2025	£2,500	£2,500
Whitecross Street Party	YMCA London City and North	Bunhill	15 July 2023 and 16 July 2023 13 July 2024 and 14 July 2024 12 July 2025 and 13 July 2025	£2,500	£2,500
The Almeida Theatre's Community Trilogy	Almeida Theatre	St Mary's and St James'	3 - 5 August 2023 1 - 3 August 2024 31 July – 2 August 2025	£2,500	£2,500

2.2. The above dates are only indicative and may be subject to change depending on external circumstances.

3. Background

3.1. The Community Festivals Fund is a small grants programme where applicants are commissioned by open competition on a three-year basis, subject to the budget being available year by year, yet still required to report annually on the previous year's activities.

3.2. The total funding available for this grant programme will be £10,000 per year, for the period of three consecutive years; and the maximum grant available per application is up to £2,500 annually (total grant up to £7,500 for three years).

3.3. The first round of Community Festivals funding under this three-year basis ran from April 2020 and ended in March 2023. Following a competitive application process, four festivals (WORD, Cally Festival, Whitecross Street Party and Angel Canal Festival) each received annual grant funding of £2,500 for the duration of the round.

3.4. A review of the 2020 – 2023 scheme informed the preparation and development for the second round of the Community Festivals Fund.

3.5. An evaluation of the outcomes of the Community Festivals Fund 2020 – 2023 funding round indicated that the grants programme has been successful in fulfilling

the expected criteria especially relating to borough-wide benefits, community cohesion, inclusivity, access, cultural benefit and partnership working.

- 3.6. There were slight revisions to the selection and eligibility criteria whilst the overall format and framework remained broadly the same.
- 3.7. The Community Festivals Fund budget for 2023 - 24 is currently confirmed as £10,000.
 - 3.7.1. The council can only guarantee the second and third instalments of the grant as long as sufficient funds are available. In the event that the Community Festivals Fund is no longer affordable, the council is able to withdraw funding in years two and three respectively. It is possible that the indicative amounts allocated to successful organisations may therefore be reduced for future years.
 - 3.7.2. The council will pay the grant to successful applicants to the programme 2023-2026 in accordance with the payment conditions as set out in the grant agreement letter which read as follows:
 - a) The first payment of the Grant for the period April 2023 to March 2024 will be paid in advance, and subject to receipt of the signed Grant Offer Letter.

You will also need to send evidence of the following:

 - Venue permission
 - Proof of Public Liability Insurance
 - Relevant entertainment licenses
 - Template audience/participant survey
 - Update on plans to liaise with the Council for stalls and marketing relevant to the Council.
 - b) The second payment (period April 2024 to March 2025) and the third payment* (period April 2025 to March 2026) of the Grant are conditional on the council receiving and approving any additional monitoring information we have asked for and proof of match investment annually.
 - c) *The third payment will be released in two instalments of 75% and 25% of the total annual amount due subject to the conditions listed in the payment schedule below.
 - d) Please note the dates listed in the payment schedule are the dates by which we expect you to submit your invoice and the information to meet the relevant conditions. The dates do not indicate when we will send a

payment. It will normally take up to 30 working days to process and release funds.

4. Community Festivals Fund 2023 – 2026 Round Two

- 4.1 The Community Festivals Fund competitive application process was initiated for the second round as per the timeline attached as Appendix A.
 - 4.1.1 Some small revisions have been made to the fund's application documentation to enhance partnership working, facilitate the monitoring process and improve clarity of reporting timescales. These are reflected in amendments to the payment conditions and increased detail in relevant existing clauses relating to marketing and publicity and Islington Council's presence at festivals through provision of free stalls.
 - 4.1.2 In addition, selection criteria have been adapted to embed awareness of the Islington Council's Vision 30: Building a Net Zero Carbon Islington by 2030 strategy and to promote good environmental policy and practices among prospective grant applicants.
 - 4.1.3 Full details of the 2023 - 26 eligibility and selection criteria for applications are listed at Appendix B.
- 4.2 The Community Festivals Small Grants 2023 – 2026 scheme was promoted through LBI Communications, on the council external website and social media, on the internal council staff intranet and in Islington Council, Councillor Updates and Children Services bulletins.
 - 4.2.1 In addition, it was promoted directly at cultural sector meetings and LBI Equalities-led community events as well as through Voluntary Action Islington news group and direct mailings to previous applicants, arts and cultural sector organisations and other third parties who had expressed an interest in the scheme via the Culture team.
 - 4.2.2 Details of eligibility and selection criteria, together with application guidance notes were available on the Islington Council website. In keeping with council accessibility practice, applications were required to be made directly through the online portal. Digital and hardcopy versions of the Community Festivals Fund application form were also made available upon request.
 - 4.2.3 The deadline for applications was Thursday 30 March 2023 at 12 noon.
- 4.3 The scheme received a total of 10 applications for this second round in the three-year grant format which is equivalent to the number received in 2020 for the first

round. The total amount requested by organisations in this funding round was £24,244. This is a slight decrease in comparison to the previous round's total request of £26,050.

- 4.3.1 Details of all applications received by the stated deadline are attached at Appendix C.
- 4.4 All applications were initially assessed for shortlisting against the published eligibility criteria by officers from the Culture team. This included confirmation of organisation eligibility, evidence of governance, safeguarding provisions and borough-wide benefit.
 - 4.4.1 Two applications were ineligible for the fund due to 1) their narrow target audience or limited venue capacity and 2) not offering any or sufficient additional external funding.
 - 4.4.2 The eight remaining eligible applications were shortlisted and further assessed by officers from the Culture, Equalities and Community Partnerships teams against the published selection criteria.
- 4.5 Outcomes for Unsuccessful Applicants
 - 4.5.1 Unsuccessful applicants who applied for funding support for smaller community events that will primarily provide benefit to hyper-local neighbourhoods or specific ward areas will be encouraged to apply to the Local Initiatives Fund and Islington Community Chest.
 - 4.5.2 Additionally, unsuccessful applicants will also be signposted to alternative arts funding sources such as Arts Council England and National Lottery where relevant. This will include an invitation to attend a 'Meet the Funders' event, focussed on arts funding, jointly arranged by Islington Council and Voluntary Action Islington with representation from Arts Council England and Cripplegate Foundation.
- 4.6 Officer recommendations have been made assessing each Community Festivals Fund application received against published funding eligibility and selection criteria and on the quality of the applications.
 - 4.6.1 The applications received from the four organisations outlined in the table below satisfactorily demonstrated evidence and fulfilment of the seven key criteria identified for the fund: **cultural benefit, diversity and equality, value for money, inclusivity and accessibility, match funding and partnership, through well-managed** festivals and event activities with **borough-wide** reach which meet the council's priorities.

Name of Festival	Organisation Name	Abridged Description from Application	Ward (for Main Event / Location)
WORD	All Change	Islington's annual WORD festival produced by All Change celebrates the transformative power of words through a programme of high-quality arts activities, events and learning opportunities that encourage residents to develop enjoyment in reading, writing and freedom of expression. The festival activity extends across the year, with public facing events and celebrations from 1-10 October each year and WORD-badged events in June and March.	Borough-wide
Cally Festival	Copenhagen Youth Project	The festival showcases "The Cally" – a distinctive place with a strong sense of community, many challenges but also resilience and optimism. A section of Caledonian Rd is closed to traffic between 6am and 9pm to accommodate the festival which takes place on a midsummer Sunday of each year. This large-scale community event is the largest street festival in Islington and is an event where the Borough's communities come together and celebrate everything the place has to offer.	Caledonian
Whitecross Street Party (WXSP)	YMCA London City and North	Whitecross Street Party and the exceptional large-scale street art exhibition 'Rise of the Nonconformists' will take over Whitecross Street for the 13th time this year. Programmed together with Islington's local creative communities alongside quality artists and performers, this unique event attracts a diverse and wide-ranging public audiences and local families over two days of the event, whilst being featured internationally through participating artists online platforms.	Bunhill
The Almeida Theatre's Community Trilogy	Almeida Theatre	TRILOGY is a three-year outreach and participation project that will bring together 1,000 people from our local community to make extraordinary theatre. TRILOGY's objectives: •Giving as many local people access to creative opportunities as possible •Building sustained relationships with participants - as audiences, artists, or both •Strengthening wellbeing and intergenerational relationships in our borough TRILOGY will build on our impact during the pandemic.	St Mary's and St James'

- 4.7 Islington Community Festivals Grant Agreements for successful applicants will be informed by the contents of the application form submitted and any supplementary information requested as part of the decision-making process.
- 4.8 Community Festivals Fund 2023 – 2026 Grant offer letters for the four successful awardees will be prepared to reflect any additional special terms and conditions required.
- 4.9 The standard grant offer template as adapted for the Community Festivals Fund 2023 – 2026 is attached at Appendix D with revisions to the previous version indicated where applicable.

5. Implications

5.1. Financial Implications

- 5.1.1. Funding available to support festivals outlined in this report is £10,000 annually. In the event that the Community Festivals Fund is no longer affordable, the Council is able to withdraw funding in years 2 and 3 respectively. It is possible that the indicative amounts allocated to successful organisations may therefore be reduced for future years.
- 5.1.2. This funding has been allocated from the Cultural Enrichment core budget.
- 5.1.3. This report recommends that the Community Festival Fund grant for 2023 – 2026 is allocated to the values requested from the four successful festival organisers. This is detailed in **Table 2.1** and this is within the £10,000 allocated budget.

5.2. Legal Implications

- 5.2.1. There are no legal implications arising from this proposal. Under Section 2 of the Local Government Act 2000, the Council has the power to give support to organisations in the voluntary and community sector to provide services that are likely to achieve the promotion or improvement of the economic, social or environmental well-being of residents within the local authority's area.

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

- 5.3.1. The Community Festivals Fund award recommendations are unlikely to have any significant environmental implications as the total amount of funding being awarded (and overall number of events being supported) has not changed from the previous funding round 2020 - 2023.
- 5.3.2. For the Community Festivals Fund 2023 – 2026 application process, the selection criteria have been adapted to embed awareness of the Islington Council's Vision

30 strategy and to promote good environmental policy and practices among prospective grant applicants.

- 5.3.3. All applicants were signposted to Islington Council's Vision 30 strategy as part of the application process and expected to demonstrate that appropriate consideration was given to the environmental impact of their proposed festival.
- 5.3.4. All applicants were required to clearly demonstrate a commitment to using environmentally friendly policies and practices and to identify how these would be embedded in the delivery of the proposed festival with examples. Where an organisation had an environmental or sustainability policy in place, this was to be declared and supported by examples of how sustainable practices would be embedded within the delivery of the proposed festival.
- 5.3.5. The inclusion of a dedicated application section about environmental responsibility provided the opportunity for applicants to indicate 'source local' principles, low carbon behaviours and highlight innovative or creative climate change mitigation projects as part of their proposal.
- 5.3.6. Successful grantees will therefore have made reference to active plans to minimise waste, encourage walking/cycling, minimise car usage and facilitate other best green festival practices as part of their proposed events and activities.
- 5.3.7. By requiring all applicants to consider their proposal's environmental impact and to identify sustainable and environmentally friendly actions, a baseline for monitoring has been created.
- 5.3.8. Successful grantees will continue to receive relevant signposting to the council's Vision 30 initiatives throughout the three-year cycle of the Community Festivals Fund.
- 5.3.9. Successfully grantees will be signposted to arts and culture sector-specific information about evolving sustainability and environmentally best practice and encouraged to seek relevant accreditation where possible.
- 5.3.10. An annual review of environmental impact considerations and best environmental practice forms part of the monitoring and evaluation reporting framework for successful grantees to ensure that their festivals continue to contribute to a net zero carbon Islington by 2030.

5.4. Equalities 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. An Equalities Impact Assessment is not required in relation to this report, because the Community Festivals Fund has been designed to support Islington-based organisations to deliver high quality, innovative, community focused festivals that are accessible to, and provide benefit for, residents across the borough and promote cultural benefit, stronger communities and partnership working.
- 5.4.3. Equalities values and principles are embedded within the eligibility and selection criteria for the Community Festivals Fund. Grants are awarded upon assessment of the seven key criteria identified for the fund: cultural benefit, diversity and equality, value for money, inclusivity and accessibility, match funding and partnership, through well-managed festivals and event activities with borough-wide reach which meet the council's priorities.
- 5.4.4. It is a core requirement to satisfactorily demonstrate how grant allocation from this fund will be used to ensure accessibility and inclusivity for Islington's most disadvantaged communities, such as those from areas of high deprivation, in addition to being open and welcoming to all from across the borough.
- 5.4.5. Festival organisers must demonstrate a commitment to providing events that meet the diverse needs of local residents, many of whom have protected characteristics. Equality values and impacts must be considered by festival organisers to fully enable the broadest range of Islington residents to be involved in festivals as audiences, participants and organisers.
- 5.4.6. Organisations that are recommended for grant awards from the Community Festivals Fund are assessed on their ability to satisfactorily evidence their ability to deliver events with equality, diversity and inclusion present. This will be demonstrated through one or more targeted approaches that:
- showcase and support creative ideas from communities who are under-represented in or don't usually engage in arts, culture and heritage activities

- provide opportunities for local communities to experience socially engaged art relating to the environment, climate change and/or sustainability, and to health and well-being.
- give under-represented or marginalised groups opportunities to lead or facilitate arts, culture and heritage activities and/or
- increase creative employment and volunteering opportunities for under-represented or marginalised groups

5.4.7. The Community Festivals Fund provides resources for arts-led community-focussed festivals that encourage local people from a range of different backgrounds to engage with a breadth of creative and cultural activities that highlight and celebrate Islington's diverse communities.

6. Conclusion and reasons for recommendations

6.1. The Community Festivals Fund provides an opportunity for the Council to support four local organisations to develop and deliver a broad range of events that will provide borough-wide benefit for local residents. Officer recommendations have been made assessing each application against established eligibility and funding criteria and on the quality of the applications.

Appendices:

- Appendix A - Community Festivals Fund 2023 – 2026 Second Three-Year Round Timetable
- Appendix B - Full eligibility and selection criteria
- Appendix C - Applications received for Community Festivals Fund 2023 – 2026 Small Grant Scheme
- Appendix D - Revised Grant Offer 2023 – 2026 template letter.

Background papers:

- None

Final report clearance:

Signed by: 

Executive Member for Homes and Communities

Date: 28/06/2023

Report Author: Chrys Chijiutomi, Cultural Enrichment Officer
Tel: +447525 246550
Email: chrys.chijiutomi@islington.gov.uk

Financial Implications Author: Ellena Smith, Deputy Finance Manager
Tel: +442075274257
Email: ellena.smith@islington.gov.uk

Legal Implications Author: Helene Plant, Commercial Contracts and Procurement Solicitor

Tel: +442075273378
Email: helene.plant@islington.gov.uk