

Grants Board
21 June 2023

WELWYN HATFIELD COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the GRANTS BOARD held on Wednesday 21 June 2023 at 7.30 pm in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, The Campus, Welwyn Garden City, Herts, AL8 6AE

PRESENT: Councillors M.Siewniak (Chairman)
M.Birleson (Vice-Chairman)

L.Chesterman, D.Jones, S.McNamara, P.Smith,
F.Wachuku

OFFICIALS Executive Director (Place) (C. Barnes)
PRESENT: Assistant Director (Leisure, Community and Cultural Services) (J. Guthrie)
Democratic Services Assistant (V. Mistry)

At the beginning of the meeting the Executive Director (Place) gave a short presentation on what the Grants Board was having previously awarded the Council's small community grants programme and making recommendations to Cabinet on the award of Annual Grants and setting the criteria for Annual Grants. Going forward, the Board will oversee the Community Lottery, including setting the criteria for good causes, as well as continuing to oversee Annual Grants. The format of the meeting was also covered.

1. SUBSTITUTION OF MEMBERS

The following substitution of a Committee Members had been made in accordance with Council Procedure Rules:

Councillor P. Smith for Councillor B. Sarson

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J.P. Skoczylas and B. Sarson.

3. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 8 February 2023 were agreed as a correct record and noted by the Chair.

4. COMMUNITY LOTTERY

Members received a presentation from the Assistant Director (Leisure, Community and Cultural Services) on the Community Lottery.

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The Community Lottery will be replacing the Small community grants and was agreed at Cabinet in February 2023.

It was noted a tender was carried out in 2022/23 for a community lottery operator.

The Council applied for and successfully obtained a Gambling Licence in May 2023.

The Council has partnered with Gatherwell to deliver the One Welwyn Hatfield Community Lottery.

The aims of the Lottery are:

- Delivering the proceeds locally – a Welwyn Hatfield Community Lottery would deliver benefits to local causes only i.e. players can be assured that the proceeds will stay within Welwyn Hatfield borough.
- Maximising benefits to the community – to bolster support and to help in continuing the good work that the Council already does. 60% of proceeds will go to good local causes.
- Delivering winners locally – whilst anyone could play, it is likely that players will be locally based, and hence it will be easier to maximise the value from winners' stories and encourage more participation.

Members were shown the proposed eligibility criteria for the community lottery and what the council will not fund.

Members were shown how the lottery worked for supporters and how the lottery worked for the good causes.

The tickets for the lottery cost just £1 a week. Each ticket has a 1 in 50 chance to win a prize each week, with a top prize of £25,000.

Each ticket has six numbers and each number is between 0 and 9. There will be a draw every Saturday night when a six digit winning combination will be picked. Prizes will be given to players with tickets that match the first or last 2 to 6 numbers from the winning combination. Match all six and organisations can win the jackpot.

The role of the Grants Board would be to agree the Eligibility Criteria for good causes, receive updates on good causes that have registered and receive quarterly reports on the scheme.

The following points were noted:

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- Members asked in regards to the good causes, what support will the council give to them? Officers stated that the council would be providing the platform and supporting in the background, promoting the good causes but will not be promoting each one individually. The council will promote the community lottery as a whole. The community partnerships team will be managing the lottery. It was noted Gatherwell will manage the lottery.
- Members were concerned that some of the small causes may not be able to promote themselves, for example the Welwyn Hatfield Womens Refuge. Officers stated that conditions could be added such as only limiting the turnover of organisations that are eligible but this could be legally challenged.
- Members were concerned about some of the smaller causes who do not have the reach or community presence like bigger organisations and wanted there to be a priority to help the smaller organisations.
- Members asked if East Herts Council had any issues with the Community Lottery? Officers stated that they did not know of any issues. It was noted the process for the lottery was straightforward and there were not many forms to complete.
- Members were not happy that there was no cross-party involvement on the community lottery and that it went straight to Cabinet.
- Officers stated the council were now in contract with Gatherwell and this was agreed at Cabinet. There will be a report to members quarterly on the community lottery and how it is doing. It was noted the small community grants were undersubscribed and money was left over.
- It was noted the lottery money would go straight to the organisations page.
- Members asked if the lottery was a pilot scheme and how long was it for? Officers stated the community lottery has been launched, the council are working with Gatherwell. It is a new concept and will work within the scope of the board.
- It was noted tickets were £1 and there will be a limit to how many tickets can be bought. Officers gave an overview of how the ticket-money is distributed, and agreed to provide a more detailed breakdown following the meeting
- Members asked how much the top prize was? Officers confirmed it was £25,000.
- There were 450 active charities in Welwyn Hatfield borough.
- Members wanted to look into ways that foodbanks and equalities could be promoted.
- It was noted the lottery runs every week and supporters can pay direct debit or payment card.
- There will be policies published on the council website such as safeguarding and gambling.
- Gatherwell had their own internal processes to comply to such as not being able to purchase tickets on the day of the draw.
- Gatherwell has 400 registered groups. It is a well promoted scheme and they know how it works.

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- Members wanted the Community Lottery to go to Overview and Scrutiny Committee after the first year. Officers stated they will look into it and add it to the work programme for the next year.
- Members wanted a special Grants Board meeting once the community lottery has been launched to see how it is working if required.
- Members wanted officers to be available to speak to charities and make them aware of the scheme. Officers stated they will look into it and will be available to speak to charities and offer support.

RESOLVED:

Members agreed the proposed eligibility criteria for the Community Lottery.

5. ANNUAL GRANTS

Members received a presentation from the Assistant Director (Leisure, Community and Cultural Services) on the Annual Grants.

The Annual Grants were due to open on Monday 31 July 2023 and close on Sunday 1 October 2023.

There will be a pre grants board meeting with Chair and Vice chair of the grants board to answer any queries and questions.

Grants Board receive the applications and agree the awards in November. Welwyn Hatfield Annual Community Grants are available to specific organisations to help fund core running costs of the project.

The Community Grant funding is for projects that make a positive impact on the community.

Organisations can apply for grant funding of up to £20,000. Funding applications over £20,000 will only be granted in exceptional circumstances and for those organisations who have been affected negatively by Covid-19.

Members were shown the current eligibility criteria for annual grants.

Applications must demonstrate a positive contribution to one or more of Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council's priorities. This works well in ensuring a central thread runs through our purpose. These are:

- Attractive and accessible green spaces
- Evolving, vibrant town centres and a growing economy
- Quality homes through managed growth
- A sense of community where people feel safe
- A well-run Council which puts our customers first

The criteria has remained the same for a long period of time.

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It is known that some organisations have received funding year on year from the annual grants fund.

Some of these organisations also receive other grant funding from the Council. Some smaller organisations do not want to apply for the larger funding pots as they think they will not be successful.

As a new Grants Board there is an opportunity to review the criteria to enable more organisations to benefit.

Implementation will then be applied to the Annual Grants applications that open at end of July.

Some suggestions for discussion:

- Reduce the maximum grant from £20k to £10k per application
- Reduce the % payable for workforce salaries from 99% to 50%
- Introduce a 12 month wait between successive funding bids
- Ringfence an allocation (£10k) to introduce a smaller grants pot of a maximum £500.00 to enable start up activity or to assist with administration i.e opening bank accounts etc

The following points were noted:

- Members did not want to reduce the funding to £10,000 but wanted to give the funding to areas where it makes maximum use.
- It was noted the overall pot of money for annual grants was £73,000. Members asked if they could increase the amount as the costs for running charities are increasing. Officers would look into it.
- It was noted that the reason for the meeting was to have a discussion about the criteria and possibly making changes to it.
- Members were worried about reducing the workforce salary to 50%.
- Members stated in regards to 'Introduce a 12 month wait between successive funding bids', could the council possibly change it to "If you are successful you will be a lower priority next year".
- In regards to Ringfencing an allocation (£10k) to introduce a smaller grants pot, members wanted the last sentence to be changed to assisting with constitution and not bank accounts.
- Members who were new to Grants Board asked if the Annual Grants have been successful in the past as it is getting harder to fund charities in Welwyn Hatfield? Officers stated that the committee did make decisions on the organisations, they looked at strengths and weaknesses of the bids. Guidance was given to members on bids and the criteria during the meetings.
- Members did not want to restrict the criteria for annual grants and wanted to make consistent decisions.
- It was noted that at the last meeting, money was left over and members asked if the money could be rolled over? Officers stated that the money

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could be rolled over and used to fund annual grants or be used in the community partnerships team.

- The needs for charities is growing and financial inclusion is important. The council need to educate people on how to complete the forms and support them and give them the tools to help them.
- Members suggested having a workshop for charities or a trustee workshop by possibly using the money left over to help charities to write constitutions or policies.
- Members asked if the application form could be simplified? Officers said they will look into the language of the form.

RESOLVED:

- (1) Officers will look into the evaluation criteria, scoring matrix and framework for workshops.
- (2) Officers will look into changing the wording of “Ringfence an allocation (£10k) to introduce a smaller grants pot of a maximum £500.00 to enable start up activity or to assist with administration i.e opening bank accounts” so it includes the constitution.

Meeting ended at 8.53pm