

TO: COMMUNITIES, HOUSING AND PLANNING POLICY BOARD

ON: 29 OCTOBER 2019

REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITIES, HOUSING AND PLANNING SERVICES

HEADING: GREENSPACES, PARKS & PLAY AREAS AND VILLAGES INVESTMENT FUND

1. Summary

- 1.1 This report updates the Communities, Housing and Planning Policy Board on progress made in supporting community projects using the Greenspaces, Parks & Play Areas and Villages Investment fund and seeks Board approval for the provision of grant funding for the project described in Section 3 of this report and set out in Appendix 1.
 - 1.2 The key objective in allocating funding is to work with and support community groups to identify and deliver improvement projects in their local communities, to improve their local greenspaces (including parks and play areas) and to strengthen the identity, heritage, uniqueness and integrity of village life. The Kilbarchan Improvement Projects application is the first being made under the Villages Investment fund criteria within the programme.
 - 1.3 The Council and partners have been working closely with many groups across Renfrewshire since the launch of the fund in October 2018, with several smaller applications now having been approved by the Director of Communities, Housing and Planning under delegated authority in order to enable smaller projects to develop and move forward quickly. Where these awards have not been previously reported to Board, they are included in Appendix 1 for information.
 - 1.4 In addition to the project contained within this Board report, several other projects are currently being developed by community groups and funding recommendations in relation to these projects will be brought to the Communities Housing and Planning Policy Board for information or approval as relevant at future meetings of the Board.
-

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Communities, Housing and Planning Policy Board:
- (i) notes the work currently being undertaken to support communities as they develop projects to be funded using the Greenspaces, Parks & Play Areas and Villages Investment Fund;
 - (ii) notes the award of grants to the value of £13,419 under delegated authority to different community groups as detailed in Appendix 1 of this report; and
 - (iii) agrees to fund the project as detailed in Section 3 of this report and Appendix 1, awarding grant funding totalling £22,000 to support Kilbarchan Improvements Project.
-

3. Summary of Applications

- 3.1 Renfrewshire Council has been working with a number of community groups since the launch of the funding in October 2018, and currently around 14 projects are actively being developed within communities across Renfrewshire, including the re-provision of a community facility in Bargarran, Erskine which was agreed by Council on 2 March 2018.
- 3.2 A cross-service panel of Officers has been established to review and assess the applications against the agreed objectives and criteria outlined in Section 4 of this report. For any grant award under £5000, the Director of Communities, Housing and Planning Services has delegated authority to approve grant applications in order to allow smaller scale projects to progress quickly within communities.
- 3.3 At the last policy board a total of £209,033 was provided to communities for the following projects:
- Howwood Community Council
 - Elderslie Community Council
 - Pals of the Privies
 - Stronger Communities Glenburn
 - Friends of Knockhill Park
- 3.4 Since the last Board meeting a total of £13,419 has been approved and disbursed under delegated authority for the following groups with full details set out in Appendix 1:
- Erskine Community Garden
 - The Darkwood Crew
 - West End Growing Grounds Association
 - Elderslie Community Council

- 3.5 In this round, one application has been assessed and currently meets the criteria for approval of grant funding and a summary of this application can be found at Appendix 1. This project is the first to be funded under the Villages Investment Fund criteria.
-

Applicant 1: Kilbarchan Improvements Project

Funding Requested: £22,000

Recommendation: Approve

- 3.6 Kilbarchan Improvements Project are 17 years into a 25-year lease from Renfrewshire Leisure occupying The Old Library in Kilbarchan. In this time the group has maintained and improved the interior of the building by painting and carpeting, and they have further installed a disabled toilet and a lift to facilitate visitors that require this to access all 3 floors. The group also secured funding in 2014 to have the ground floor windows replaced.
- 3.7 The Kilbarchan Improvements Project objectives are to advance social and recreational education for local residents. They seek to develop and strengthen their community through the arts, heritage, culture, science and environmental protection.
- 3.8 Volunteers work hard to facilitate and encourage activities for the village residents and those from surrounding areas. Around 5,000 visitors are received per annum for yoga, fitness, Thai Chi and Pilates classes, Spanish lessons, craft activities and a bridge club which are offered weekly. Monthly activities include amateur dramatics, a book group and MP's surgeries. Further ad hoc bands, comedians and a quarterly drug and alcohol group use the facility.
- 3.9 The Old Library in Kilbarchan is over 120 years old. Recent consultation presents evidence the facility is well used, by residents of Kilbarchan, Johnstone and the surrounding villages.
- 3.10 Should the funding be awarded, they will deliver the following essential repairs to the building helping secure its position as a heritage asset within the village:
- the roof pediment has moved over time and progression of the issue will render this section unsafe. This will be repaired.
 - Water ingress has caused timber decay requiring further investigation and repair and
 - Top floor windows showing signs of water ingress and require to be repaired.
- 3.11 On delivering the required repairs, the group are optimistic they will receive further Heritage funding to enable them to create a community garden in the courtyard area of the building and redecorate the upper lounge.

- 3.12 The group aspire to transform the upper lounge to offer tea dances, event receptions and birthday parties. A renovated garden area with picnic benches, will further increase this appeal.
- 3.13 The funding will be provided in stages as the development progresses.
- 3.14 A paper survey is currently being offered within the premises, this will also be posted on social media to maximise community interest to show community buy in.
- 3.15 Kilbarchan Improvement Project currently have an application in to the Heritage Lottery for £12,000. A decision is expected at the end of October 2019.
-

4 Background

- 4.1 At its meeting on 2 March 2018, Council agreed to commit £1.870 million (£1 million capital and £0.87 million revenue) to support a programme of investment in greenspaces, parks and play areas and villages.
- 4.2 On 19 September 2018, the Leadership Board agreed the key objectives of the fund to:
- Regenerate and make physical and environmental improvements to greenspaces, parks & play areas and villages across Renfrewshire;
 - Promote sustainable community use of greenspaces, parks and play areas and villages;
 - Increase levels of external funding being attracted into Renfrewshire to develop and use greenspaces, parks & play areas and villages;
 - Support communities to manage or deliver sustainable services in greenspaces, parks & play areas and villages in Renfrewshire;
 - Strengthen community capacity in Renfrewshire increasing regular participation in community events/activities; and
 - Encourage the development of new partnerships, community ownership of assets and asset transfer.
- 4.3 It was further agreed that applications for the ringfenced Villages Investment Fund should also strengthen the unique identity, heritage and integrity of village life.
- 4.4 Applicants to the fund need to be able to demonstrate:
- positive impact for local communities
 - community involvement in the design and delivery of the project
 - good working relationships and partnership with others
 - financial sustainability
 - strategic fit with the fund objectives and criteria
 - value for money and leverage of additional funding and/or resources

- 4.5 The Greenspaces, Parks & Play Areas and Villages Investment fund is closely aligned to other grant funding within the Council e.g. Community Empowerment Fund and close links are maintained to Officers administering these grants.
- 4.6 As with all Council grants, the Groups will require to comply with the terms and conditions applied. In particular Renfrewshire Council will monitor the spend to ensure it is used correctly and appropriately.
-

Implications of the Report

1. **Financial** – Council approved the allocation of £1.870 million to establish the Greenspaces, Parks & Play Parks and Villages Investment Fund in March 2018. Due to the capital works being undertaken, Officers are ensuring that there are minimal recurring revenue costs to Services in the coming years.
2. **HR & Organisational Development** – None
3. **Community Planning**

The Greenspaces, Parks & Play Parks and Village Investment Fund will be important to achieving and assisting the Community Plan by ensuring that Renfrewshire is thriving, well, fair and safe for residents, workers and visitors.
4. **Legal** – All legislative requirements will be taken cognisance of during this process wherever required e.g. health and safety requirements.
5. **Property/Assets** – There is the potential for property/assets to be included as part of this fund.
6. **Information Technology** – None
7. **Equality & Human Rights**
 - (a) It is anticipated that the fund will have a positive impact on equality and human rights, and applications for the fund will be assessed to ensure they take relevant equalities implications into account where required.
8. **Health & Safety** – Cognisance will be taken of health and safety requirements wherever required e.g. for play park equipment.
9. **Procurement** – There is potential for the Council to be procuring and installing equipment of behalf of a community group as part of this grant funding process.
10. **Risk** – Discussions with the Council Risk Manager are on-going to ensure that the risk to the Council, as part of this grant funding process, is minimised.
11. **Privacy Impact** – None

12. **CoSLA Policy Position** – Not applicable

13. **Climate Risk** – None

List of Background Papers

None

Author: Oliver Reid, Head of Communities and Public Protection.

Email: oliver.reid@renfrewshire.gov.uk

Appendix 1

Applicant	Project Description	Requested	Recommendation	Reason	Geographical Area
1. Kilbarchan Improvements Project	<p>The Kilbarchan Improvement Project looks to carry out essential repair works to the Old Library in Kilbarchan.</p> <p>This would include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repairs to the roof pediment which has moved. • Investigate and repair water ingress. • Repair and replace top floor windows showing signs of water ingress and require to be repaired. 	£22,000	Approval by Communities, Housing and Planning Policy Board.	<p>The grant funding should be approved as it matches the award criteria.</p> <p>Funding would allow repairs to be carried out to the Old Library in Kilbarchan and allow them to continue to expand their offering to the local community.</p>	Kilbarchan
2. Erskine Community Garden	<p>Erskine Community Garden have already delivered a community garden enjoyed by surrounding residents.</p> <p>The group can evidence activity and have regular visitors and supporters of the project who will volunteer to assist on litterpicks and other activities.</p> <p>Phase II of the Community Garden will see the group plant fruit trees, install a labyrinth, raised beds and sensory area. They will further supply tools for younger visitors to the garden to allow them to become more involved.</p>	£4,800	Approved by Director under delegated authority	<p>The grant funding was approved as it matches the award criteria.</p> <p>Funding will allow the group to increase their visitors and appeal to younger and older residents.</p>	Erskine
3. The Darkwood Crew	<p>The group have evidenced their commitment to cleaning up their area and paid particular attention to the nearby Falcon Day Centre and Darkwood Residential Care Home by maintaining their grounds.</p> <p>A community Garden in this area will be of particular benefit to the elderly visitors and</p>	£4,810	Approved by Director under delegated authority	<p>The grant funding was approved as it matches the award criteria.</p> <p>Funding will offer an area for local people to meet and chat. Although not exclusively for elderly residents, consultation</p>	Ferguslie

Applicant	Project Description	Requested	Recommendation	Reason	Geographical Area
	<p>residents but will also offer a designated, peaceful place to sit and enjoy the outdoors.</p> <p>The group further hope to secure funding to improve the path networks in the area. Delivery of the Community Garden will support this project.</p>			<p>evidence shows the garden will appeal particularly to this demographic.</p> <p>Improving the path networks will improve access for individuals using walking aids.</p>	
4. West End Growing Grounds Association (WEGGA)	<p>WEGGA already have a well-established Community Garden popular with keen gardening enthusiasts.</p> <p>The funding awarded will facilitate the grounds maintenance of Sanctuary Gardens on Underwood Road, Paisley ensuring the attractive presentation of the area is sustainable.</p>	£2,609	Approved by Director under delegated authority	<p>The grant funding was approved as it matches the award criteria.</p> <p>Funding will allow WEGGA at Sanctuary Gardens to continue raising its appeal and member numbers.</p>	Paisley
5. Elderslie Community Council	<p>Elderslie Community Council advise dog fouling is often raised at their meetings as a negative issue affecting the village.</p> <p>The group are keen to support their community to reduce instances and are keen to be pro-active in this regard.</p> <p>Dog poo bag dispensers will be located in key areas across the village. Elderslie CC will absorb the on-going bag cost to ensure these are consistently stocked.</p>	£1,200	Approved by Director under delegated authority	<p>The grant funding was approved as it matches the award criteria.</p> <p>Elderslie community Council should be encouraged to support responsible dog ownership within their community.</p>	Elderslie