

**Halesowen North and Halesowen South Community Forum –
Thursday 4th November 2021**

Report of the Director of Public Health and Wellbeing

Community Forum Funding

<u>Purpose</u>	
1.	To consider the allocation of expenditure from the community forum funding budget for the 2021/22 municipal year.
<u>Recommendations</u>	
2.	It is recommended that the forum: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • considers the new applications referred to in the report and makes an appropriate recommendation to the Director of Public Health and Wellbeing, and • notes details of the funding it has allocated since the last meeting of the forum held on 9th March 2020, at the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic.
<u>Background</u>	
3.	The ten community forums are responsible for allocating expenditure from the delegated community forum funding budget. The Cabinet, in March 2018, approved a new set of criteria to replace the previous guidelines against which allocations from the delegated budget should be considered, and these are attached.
4.	Copies of the new applications referred to in this report have been e-mailed to Members prior to the meeting.

	<u>Applications for consideration at this meeting</u>
5.	<p><u>Halesowen Business Improvement District</u></p> <p>Halesowen BID is applying for £2,000.00 from this forum and £2,000.00 from the Belle Vale and Hayley Green & Cradley South Community Forum for 10% matchfunding to a bid to the Severn Trent Community Fund to cover the £40,000 cost of creating a ‘caring column’ memorial commemorating those who have lost their lives to Covid-19 and recognising the contribution of key workers. This would be sited in a sensory garden on The Queensway in Halesowen town centre.</p> <p>Within the last three years, Halesowen BID has been awarded £3,500.00 for 50 radio units for local businesses in Halesowen to improve communications and deter crime (August 2019), £1,800.00 towards the development of a pocket park at Whitehall Gardens on Rumbow, Halesowen (December 2020) and £1,896.00 towards the purchase and decoration of three benches for Halesowen town centre (June 2021) by this forum with the same amounts awarded to these projects by the Belle Vale and Hayley Green & Cradley South Community Forum.</p>
6.	<p><u>Shell Corner Partnership</u></p> <p>Shell Corner Partnership is requesting £2,570.00 to hire 25 solar powered Christmas trees to be mounted on lamp posts on Long Lane, Halesowen over the Christmas period.</p> <p>During the last three years the forum has awarded the organisation £1,640 in January 2019, £1,640 in October 2019 and £2,600 in October 2020 for the solar powered trees.</p>
7.	<p><u>Funding allocated since last meeting</u></p> <p>Community forum meetings were suspended from mid-March 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic, but funding remained open to voluntary and community organisations to apply for. During the period since the last meeting of this forum, the following funding has been agreed:</p> <p><u>Shell Corner Partnership</u> – £2,600.00 for leasing 25 solar powered Christmas trees for display on Long Lane, Halesowen (October 2020).</p> <p><u>Lifecentral Church</u> - £2,000.00 towards hire of audio and lighting equipment for a drive-through santa’s grotto in Halesowen town centre (December 2020).</p> <p><u>Halesowen Business Improvement District</u> – £1,800.00 towards the development of a pocket park, including benches and a dye garden, at Whitehall Gardens on Rumbow, Halesowen (December 2020).</p>

Leaps and Bounds Trust – £2,000.00 to follow up its Halesowen dementia project with a book to capture the artwork and stories and to create a project film (March 2021).

Halesowen Business Improvement District – £1,896 towards the purchase and decoration of three benches for Halesowen town centre (June 2021).

Access in Dudley – £2,153.75 for the design and hosting of a new website for the group, a laptop and software (June 2021).

Halesowen and Rowley Regis Rotary – £2,000.00 for road management costs for the annual black country road race and fun run on 12th September 2021 (July 2021).

Halesowen in Bloom - £400.00 towards creating a wildflower meadow on Earls Island, Halesowen (August 2021)

Finance

8. Each community forum receives an annual allocation of £10,000 per ward. The balances currently available to spend are as follows:

£	Balance Bfwd from 20/21	Annual Funding 21/22	Actual Spend 21/22	Committed	Balance to award
Halesowen North	16,212.48	10,000.00	3,724.88	6,267.29	16,220.31
Halesowen South	15,746.71	10,000.00	3,724.87	6,267.29	15,754.55
Total	31,959.19	20,000.00	7,449.75	12,534.58	31,974.86

Law

9. The Localism Act 2011 gives the Council a power of general competence to act in the interests of the Community. Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972 enables the Council to do anything that is calculated to facilitate, or is conducive to or incidental to, the discharge of its statutory functions.

Risk Management

10. There are no significant risks involved in the proposal.

Equality Impact

11. A wide range of voluntary and community organisations across the borough have been awarded community forum funding. Beneficiaries have included, for example, people from across all age groups, from different ethnic and religious backgrounds and groups of disabled people. An equality impact assessment of community forum funding has been completed.

Human Resources/Organisational Development

12. A review of community forums was carried out in 2016/17 with a range of recommendations approved by the Cabinet in May 2017 for developing forums as part of the council's commitment to working more closely with local communities.

Commercial/Procurement

13. There are no significant commercial or procurement implications.

Council Priorities

14. Community forums contribute to objectives within the Borough Vision, the Council Plan and the Future Council Programme which focus on healthy, resilient, safe communities by:
- providing an opportunity for local people, elected members and partners to work together to identify and progress priorities for their local area
 - supporting people to be actively involved in their community by identifying community assets, connecting people and resources, and enabling people to share ideas and make positive things happen in their communities
 - providing opportunities for local people to influence plans and services which will impact on the local area
 - providing a forum to deal with wider community issues rather than individual complaints
 - providing funding to groups who demonstrate that they are working alongside local people and utilising existing community assets wherever possible
 - focusing on approaches which support people to be more self-reliant, independent and co-ordinated in order to increase community resilience.

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List of Background Papers

- The application forms on which this report is based have been emailed to Members prior to the meeting but contain exempt information under the terms of part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.
- Criteria for considering funding applications attached.



Funding criteria for applicants – Community Forum funding

1. Voluntary or community organisations based in Dudley borough, or which benefit people in the borough, can apply for up to a maximum of £5,000 per year. The same project will not normally be funded more than once in every three years (see note 1).
2. Applications should be for local projects i.e. in a particular ward/small number of wards and not borough wide. Applications should be from a parent organisation rather than, for example, an individual team within a sports club.
3. Applications should demonstrate how they will contribute to Dudley Council's aim to support local people and organisations to work together to improve the local community or area and encourage local people to be active citizens.
4. Applications may be for capital and/or revenue expenditure (see note 2), but revenue costs must be one-off or strictly time-limited; ongoing revenue costs will be the applicant's responsibility and will not be funded by the council.
5. Applicants are encouraged to demonstrate match funding or efforts to obtain funding elsewhere/share resources with other organisations.
6. Applications are to be submitted at least 21 days before a forum meeting in order to be considered at that meeting. Later applications will be held over to the next available meeting. Genuinely urgent applications may be considered between meetings at the discretion of community forum members.
7. Once an application is received, where appropriate a council community development worker will arrange to meet the applicants to provide advice and support with the application before it proceeds.
8. Applications will only be considered if the application form is completed fully and the requested documents submitted (see note 3).
9. If appropriate, applications may be recommended for, or redirected to, funding from other sources.
10. Applicants will need to attend the forum meeting at which their application is considered to share what they plan to do and answer any questions.
11. A recommendation on the application will be made by the forum's elected members to the council's Director of Public Health and Wellbeing.
12. A funding approval may be given with particular conditions attached e.g. equipment purchased to be shared with other organisations.

Notes:

Note 1. Individual community forums reserve the right to make exceptions depending on the circumstances of the application.

Note 2: Capital – one-off expenditure on buying equipment, vehicles, land or buildings, or carrying out improvements or new build. Revenue – expenditure on running costs of projects or activities, including staff costs and purchase of consumable items or services.

Note 3: an alternative way to apply will be available to people who may have difficulty in completing the application form because of a disability

Terms and conditions of funding

Payment will usually be made once work or an activity has been carried out and/or goods/equipment purchased and related paid invoices or receipts provided to the council.

If approved, funding will be provided on the basis that:

1. The funding is spent within nine months of approval by the community forum i.e. paid invoices/receipts are submitted to the council within this timescale. If (in exceptional circumstances) funding has been provided in advance, paid invoices/receipts must be provided to the council within three months or the money will need to be repaid to the council.
2. A representative of the organisation attends a meeting of the community forum within twelve months of the application being approved to share feedback about the difference the funding has made.
3. The organisation uses the funding only for the purpose stated, agrees to provide any extra information that the Council may require and allows Council officers to inspect goods/equipment purchased, if required.
4. Any goods/equipment funded are sufficiently insured.
5. The Council's internal and external auditors have the right to inspect documentation relating to the funding application.
6. If funding has been awarded based on misleading or inaccurate information, or the organisation receives funding for the same items from another source, the organisation will repay part or all of the allocation as required by the Council.

Elected members, when considering community forum applications:

1. should apply the funding criteria for applicants in considering applications; the council's Standing Orders and Financial Regulations, and the council's legal powers must be complied with in dealing with applications;
2. should declare any interests that they have in any of the applications to be considered;
3. will make recommendations on applications for community forum funding to the Director of Public Health and Wellbeing who has delegated authority for community forum funding;
4. are free to decide whether to pool their resources across wards or to use each ward allocation only for applications relating to that ward;
5. may wish to identify with the local community some priorities for their areas on an annual or other basis and invite grant applications which relate to these;
6. should allow applicants, who will be asked to attend forum meetings, to present their applications, and successful applicants, who will be attending a future meeting, to provide feedback. This will help in establishing accountability and a clear audit trail for expenditure, as well as sharing learning and inspiration with other community groups; and
7. have discretion in dealing with applications at meetings in the absence of the applicants.