

Lichfield City Council

Minutes of the Meeting of the Grants Advisory Committee Held via 'zoom' at 6.00pm on 16 September 2024

PRESENT: Councillors C Ball (Chair) and Cllrs H Ashton, J Christie, A Hughes, J Marshall and R Yardley.

APOLOGIES: Councillors J Blackman, D Baker and K Farrelly.

Copies of applications for any general revenue grant/CIL funding as detailed in these minutes are available to all members on request to the Town Clerk.

14. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATION

Cllr H Ashton declared an interest in agenda item 6 (minute 18) as Late Night Listeners is associated with Churches Together, the latter being an organisation in which Cllr Ashton is an active member.

15. MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

RESOLVED: *That the minutes of the Grants Advisory Committee meeting held on 8 July 2024 be confirmed as a correct record [Minutes adopted by council on 24 July 2024]*

16. GENERAL REVENUE GRANTS – 2024/25 BALANCES

Members considered the current position of the council's revenue grant reserve/allocations, noting that £4,333 remains.

RESOLVED: *That the report be noted.*

17. GENERAL REVENUE GRANT – REQUEST FROM CHRIST CHURCH PCC

Members considered the Town Clerk's agenda report which detailed the current arrangements for grant payments to churchyards, together with a brief overview of the origin of such payments. The Committee was asked to consider a request from Christ Church PCC to increase the annual payment following increases to costs of maintaining the area, and the lack of any inflationary increase since 2015.

RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL:

- 1. The inflationary increase be reinstated for 2025/26, the 2015 baseline figure to be adjusted for inflation since that date to the forthcoming January 2025 RPI figure; the resulting figure to be the amount of grant awarded**
- 2. As with the original resolution, in order to make the grant equitable, a similar increase be applied to the grant given to the remaining churchyards.**
- 3. The Committee to recommend that, for 2026/27 and beyond, CPI rather than RPI is used to determine the annual inflationary increase.**

18. GENERAL REVENUE GRANT REQUEST – LATE NIGHT LISTENERS

The Committee considered a grant request in the sum of £300 to purchase public liability insurance to support volunteers offering assistance to those in need in the inner part of the City late at night.

RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL: *That a grant in the sum of £300.00 be awarded to Late Night Listeners to facilitate the purchase of Public Liability Insurance.*

19. CIL MONIES RECEIVED, COMMITTED AND FORECAST

Members considered the agenda report which provided detail of completed and ongoing CIL funded projects. The current amount of CIL available for allocation being £38,088.

RESOLVED: *That the report be noted.*

20. CIL REQUEST – LIBERTY JAMBOREE

Members considered the agenda report and accompanying bid from Liberty Jamboree. The request was to fund the lift in the new Liberty Jamboree premises at a cost of £32,351.80. When circulated to the Committee for informal consideration previously, the general view of members was that the bid would be supported, but that only part funding would be given.

The Committee noted that the Town Clerk had approached the Chief Executive of LDC regarding the possibility of a contribution from District Council funds, and received confirmation on 29 August that LDC would indeed contribute £16,000 on a match funding basis. The Committee was therefore asked to consider a CIL allocation of £16,351.80 to both activate the £16,000 contribution from LDC and make up the remaining shortfall in project funds.

It was agreed by the Committee that Liberty Jamboree operated outside of, as well as within, the City and indeed the District, and following discussion of their published accounts, it appeared there was access to relatively significant funds. It was however also acknowledged that the organisation was deserving of support, and the match-funding with LDC was dependant upon the LCC allocation being made. Councillor H Ashton abstained from the vote.

RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL: *A CIL allocation of £16,351.80 be awarded to both activate the £16,000 contribution from LDC and to provide the remaining sum required for the installation of the lift at the new Liberty Jamboree premises.*

21. CIL REQUEST – JL PETIT PLAQUE

Members considered a CIL request to fund a plaque to the artist JL Petit, the request being received from representatives of the Bishop of Lichfield. The Committee noted that the location and detail of the plaque was to be agreed. The Committee also supported the creation of a draft policy document to assist with consideration of such requests in the future; the document to be prepared by the Museums and Heritage Officer and Town Clerk.

RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL: *That a CIL award of up to £750 be given to facilitate a plaque to J L Petit.*

22. CIL REQUEST – LICHFIELD COMMUNITY SPEED WATCH (CSW)

Members considered the CIL application from CSW for 12 signs, some of which are proposed to be located on the 'entrance to the city' signs that are owned by LCC. Based on costings provided by CSW, costs were likely to be in the region of £1,500. Cllr J Christie sought confirmation that SCC had approved the provision; the Town Clerk confirmed that while he has not seen an approval document, confirmation of approval from both CSW and SCC has been received in writing.

RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL: *That a CIL award of up to £1,500 be awarded to CSW to facilitate the provision of 12 Community Speed Watch signs in the City as detailed in their proposal.*

23. CIL REQUEST UPDATE

Additional 20mph Repeater Signs

Members noted the update, which requested consideration be given to funding a 'speed and volume count' for the areas where the additional signage had been suggested. The cost of this provision would be £2,100, with the decision as to whether to install the signage remaining with SCC. Councillor J Marshall stated this was a lot of money for a 'maybe' and that the provision of such signage should rest with SCC. The Committee agreed that it would not be appropriate for LCC to fund the speed and volume count.

RESOLVED: *That the Committee does not wish to fund the 'speed and volume count'.*

Additional Lighting – Festival Gardens

Members considered the Town Clerk's report which followed a request from Councillor Marshall. Unfortunately, while a quotation for the maximum scheme cost had been received from E-on, no plans had yet been provided for members to consider, and photometric calculations were awaited. Members supported the proposal but wished for further detail and discussion with other parties before a scheme was finalised. It was agreed that a recommendation be made to Council for 'in principle' funding, subject to informal/formal discussions with the Committee and other stakeholders.

RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL: *That up to £13,032.74 of CIL be allocated in principle to the improvement of lighting in Festival Gardens. The final lighting scheme to be discussed and agreed formally/informally as necessary with the Grants Committee and other stakeholders, notably Lichfield Historic Parks.*

24. CIL ALLOCATION UPDATES

Members considered the agenda report detailing progress with several CIL allocations including the city centre plaques project, Michael Johnson's workroom at the Birthplace Museum, installation of the cycle repair station etc.

Cllr A Hughes commented on the draft text for the proposed Stowe Pool information boards that the Town Clerk circulated prior to the meeting; Cllr Hughes felt there was too much text and some of the subject matter should perhaps be reconsidered. The Chair echoed Cllr Hughes' comments. It was agreed that members comments would be fed back to the Town Clerk for collation and to send to LDC. The Town Clerk advised that he would circulate to the Committee the email response submitted to LDC on 12 September, following significant input from the Museums and Heritage Officer and Deputy Town Clerk.

RESOLVED: *That the report be noted.*

25. ACTION PLAN UPDATES

Members considered the action plan; the updated document is included as **APPENDIX A** to these minutes.

RESOLVED: *That the update be noted.*

26. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

1. Councillor H Ashton provided an update on the digital signage project with LDC. Cllr Ashton stated that he had met with LDC officers to discuss the project and obtained agreement that digital signage aimed at residents (rather than visitors) would be piloted to prove the technology, with a view to visitor focussed boards being utilised at a later date. Cllr Ashton advised the next stage was to compile detailed costings. It is intended that the screens are installed both within and outside the City boundary, with Burntwood Town Council to also be approached in due course regarding provision and possible funding

contribution. Lichfield District Council would retain responsibility for hosting and updating the information provided. Cllr Ashton sought an assurance from the Committee that it would give favourable consideration to a request for a CIL contribution from LCC to the project once a detailed proposal is put forward. The Committee agreed to this, allowing Cllr Ashton to report back to LDC and others that 'in principle' support for the project had been confirmed by the Committee, but that an amount of any possible CIL allocation had not been discussed in detail. The Committee did however agree that any funding recommendation (if made) would be a contribution to overall costs, rather than funding the whole project.

RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL: That favourable consideration be given to funding a contribution to the project once further detail has been provided.

2. Cllr J Marshall asked whether CIL could be utilised for improvements to LCC property, notably the Guildhall. The Town Clerk confirmed that CIL had been used to fund improvements to LCC assets on several occasions, including Curborough Community Centre, Boley Park Community Hall and Festival Gardens, but never at the Guildhall.

Cllr Marshall asked if officers could advise on possible CIL-appropriate projects at the Guildhall that would improve the building. The Town Clerk confirmed that significant work had been carried out to the Guildhall in the past eight years, not least the refurbishment of the main hall in 2020, but also more minor upgrades to almost every room and corridor in the building, meaning that much of the obvious work that could be funded by CIL had been already completed. *[for example, first floor kitchen remodelling, ground floor kitchen refit, renovation of ground floor and upstairs toilet facilities, repairs to the 'stairwell' roof to address longstanding water ingress, new LED lighting to the Guildroom, main corridor, Ashmole Room and both kitchens, renovation of Minstrels' Gallery, redecoration etc]*

The Town Clerk stated that the Guildhall, as an impressive listed building, was still basically a community centre, and it would be extremely difficult and expensive to change the building significantly – for example into a conference centre with integrated technology and provision of drinks/meals etc. As a result, the focus is currently on improving the presentation of the Guildhall with regular maintenance, rather than significant upgrades to facilities.

27. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The Town Clerk to circulate dates following confirmation of the Chair's availability.

The Chair requested an item be added to the next agenda to consider the level of grant funding from 2025/26 budgets, the current sum having not increased for some years, and the possibility of a separate 'school holiday activities' fund; the outcome of the related discussions to form a recommendation to council and assist with the preparation of the draft 2025/26 budget.

**THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS
THE CHAIR DECLARED THE MEETING CLOSED AT 6.57PM**

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ACTION PLAN

Action	Comments	Timescale
City Centre Plaques	Members noted the updated report at Appendix 2	Members noted that this is an ongoing project which is being progressed in phases
Samuel Johnson Birthplace Redevelopment	Members noted the updated report at Appendix 2	Imminent
Signs in the City Centre indicating walking direction to named carparks	The City Council is a consultee on LDC's wider aims for signage around the City.	Work is ongoing – led by LDC
Stowe Pool Lighting	Members noted the updated report at Appendix 2	September 2024
Information Boards – Stowe Pool	Members noted the updated report at Appendix 2	Following receipt of draft text, comments from the Committee to be collated and submitted to LDC. The Town Clerk to circulate the response already provided to LDC by LCC officers
20mph Repeater Signs	Members did not wish to fund the 'speed and volume count' as stipulated by SCC	N/A

Updated 16 September 2024