

## GRANT APPLICATION 2017/18 – ASSESSMENT AND RECOMMENDATION

<b>Priority Corporate Outcomes</b>	To develop more innovative ways of maintaining parks and green spaces, including through greater partnerships with community groups To empower local residents and the community at large to play a more active role in improving their lives, local communities and public services To support residents to live as healthily and independently as possible through increased physical activity	
<b>Organisation</b>	<b>FINCHLEY VICTORIA BOWLING &amp; CROQUET CLUB</b>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;"><b>ref</b></div> 136/C/SPO
<b>Address</b>	Ballards Lane, N3	
<b>Relevant policy, aims and objectives</b>		
<p>The council is committed to maintaining Barnet as a successful, prosperous place where people want to live and in which an active community can thrive. This includes protecting and enhancing the natural (and built) environment. Strategic objectives include empowering residents, as part of the process of delivering more for less, to take on more personal and community responsibility for keeping Barnet a successful borough and improving the local environment and to look after their health and well-being through improvement in lifestyle.</p> <p>The council is assisting bowls clubs to become financially self-sustaining, reducing the annual cost of providing and maintaining bowling greens and associated facilities at seven sites across the borough in accordance with objectives in the community management and medium term financial strategies.</p>		
<b>Activities / proposal</b>		
<p>Finchley Victoria Bowling &amp; Croquet Club (FVBCC) is an unincorporated association which has offered bowls facilities in Victoria Park, N3, since its foundation in 1925. Croquet was launched as a new activity in 2016. It has use of two greens, one earmarked for bowls and the other now for croquet, and a pavilion building, rebuilt after arson attacks destroyed two original clubhouse buildings in 2007. The greens and the pavilion are let from the council (as a 'tenant-at-will'), which, in return for an annual fee based on the size of the club's membership, has borne responsibility for all costs. Affiliated to Bowls England, the club stages bowls matches against other clubs between April and October each year. In July, it was one of a small number of clubs to be invited to play a home and away bowls match against the Royal Chelsea Pensioners.</p> <p>The loss of the two original buildings ten years ago adversely affected membership, which dropped to a low of eighteen. The addition of croquet is one of the ways in which the club is seeking to address the situation. 37 new members have been enrolled since an open day unveiled the croquet green last year, 70% of whom now play both bowls and croquet.</p> <p>FVBCC has also focused on developing the pavilion as a community hub for Finchley Church End. A range of activities now take place there throughout the week, including keep fit classes and social activities for older and disabled people; non-vocational courses run by Barnet University of the Third Age; and a new initiative, 'Barnet's Business', delivered by Barnet Carers Centre supporting unpaid carers. Up to 200 people currently use the pavilion each week.</p> <p>In common with the six other bowls clubs in Barnet, FVBCC is in the process of agreeing terms with the council to assume responsibility for a number of heads of expenditure previously borne by the authority and become financially self-sustaining. Under the new arrangements, the club will be awarded a lease of the greens and the pavilion on terms to be finalised.</p>		

This application seeks help in three ways: (a) with a publicity and marketing campaign to continue to grow membership and use of the club's facilities, (b) to purchase more croquet equipment and build a storage shed, to relieve pressure on space in the pavilion where playing and other equipment is currently kept; and (c) to buy a bowling green grass mower.

The publicity and marketing campaign is aimed at extending the club's reach beyond Finchley, embracing the new croquet initiative and the club's unique status in offering such a facility. It will also market the pavilion's capacity to support all types of community activity and its availability for hire, both by community groups and privately, thereby increasing income.

The need to increase the stock of croquet equipment arises both from the growth in membership over the last year and the recent introduction of a 'pay and play' option, enabling members of the community to try out croquet or play on a casual basis. The construction of a shed will comply with police advice to discontinue the storage of equipment in the pavilion, where it is an eyesore and reduces capacity, in the interests of health and safety.

Although the club proposes to retain the services of Green Spaces & Street Scene to maintain the two greens, for which it will pay the actual cost involved, the purchase of a mower will enable volunteers to undertake some of the work, reducing the frequency of cutting by the grounds maintenance team.

The continuing existence of bowls clubs (and bowling greens) contributes to the delivery of the health improvement agenda, especially amongst older people and people with mental health problems. All of Barnet's bowls clubs, including FVBCC, acknowledge the need to do more to reach out into the community and attract new members. The Environment Committee on 11 January 2017 noted the progress made on negotiations with each of the clubs in relation to achievement of savings targets in the medium term financial strategy, the final terms of the new arrangements to be agreed in due course.

### **Cost and financial need**

In 2016/17, FVBCC incurred expenditure of £3,791, of which £2,520 was the annual fee payable to the council for maintenance of the greens and pavilion. The other main recurrent elements of its annual budget include insurance, printing, stationery, postage and some additional pavilion maintenance costs. Income (£3,710 in 2016/17) is principally by way of an annual subscription payable by members and charges for use of the pavilion. A small net profit is made on the sale of refreshments. The club incurred a deficit of £81 last year. Net current assets at 31/3/2017 were £12,764.

The budget for 2017/18, reflecting the new financial arrangements under discussion with the council, whereby maintenance of the greens and (external parts of) the pavilion will more than double in cost, estimates that expenditure will increase to £22,290. This sum includes public utility costs (of £2,000) previously met by the council and internal maintenance of the pavilion, which will be the club's responsibility. Income is projected to be £11,345, reflecting fundraising measures instituted to date. The club's reserves will defray a potential shortfall of £10,945 pending the outcome of the publicity and marketing campaign in terms of increased membership and revenue from community use of the pavilion.

A grant of £9,929 is sought, of which £4,900 is for the marketing and publicity campaign, reaching out not only to the wider community but also with a view to persuading social members to take out full club membership. The balance is made up of one-off costs of £1,479 for new croquet equipment; £1,800 for the storage shed; and £1,750 for a bowling green grass mower, in each case based on the cheapest quotation obtained and inclusive of VAT.

The application is recommended for support in the context of how the transfer of management of bowls facilities to the clubs that occupy the sites will help realise an annual saving of £100,000 in the cost to the council of providing such. All of the clubs are to be exempt initially from application of the council's community asset strategy to enable them to achieve self-sufficiency. The award proposed incorporates only a 50% contribution to printing, stationery and postage costs (of £2,150), however, as the sum in question is not solely restricted to encouraging new or full membership.

#### Grant recommendation, type and conditions

**£8,900** (from Edward Harvist Charity)

Start-up grant  
One-off grant

\*

\*

#### Special conditions:

Payment of the award should be made subject to confirmation that all necessary consents have been obtained for the construction of the storage shed and receipt of an undertaking to notify its completion and to facilitate an inspection by the council.

#### Target grant outcomes

(a) To support Finchley Victoria Bowling & Croquet Club in assuming responsibility for managing the bowls (and croquet) facilities in Victoria Park and (b) to enhance opportunities for engagement in physical activity in support of a healthy lifestyle.

**Date:** November 2017