

GRANT APPLICATION 2012/13 – ASSESSMENT AND RECOMMENDATION

Corporate Priorities	<p>Creation of the right environment to promote responsible growth, development and success across the borough</p> <p>Supporting families and individuals that need it – promoting independence, learning and well-being</p> <p>Improving the satisfaction of residents and businesses with the London Borough of Barnet as a place to live, work and study</p>
Organisation	<p>SPACES</p> <p>19 Calvert Road, Barnet, EN5 4HH.</p>

Relevant policy, aims and objectives

The council is committed to helping people to be independent and live active lives, recognising that some people need more support than others to achieve this. Development of the Big Society in Barnet seeks to make greater use of local creativity and entrepreneurial spirit and help galvanize new citizen- and community-led projects to address local issues.

The Corporate Plan also states how it will be encouraging local volunteers to improve and care for their area by carrying out extra work which will make their neighbourhoods look more attractive. The council is seeking to develop new and effective partnerships to deliver high quality public services having regard to the significant reduction in government funding. The voluntary and community sector has a significant role to play in this strategy, especially by increasing choice, accessibility and value for money, leading on innovative solutions and improving customers' perception of public services.

The Micro Fund is open to anyone who has an idea for a project in Barnet that needs a small amount of kick-start funding but could have a big impact. Funding can be used for (a) one off setting up costs (b) business support (c) setting up a project e.g. equipment or tools and (d) certain other one-off costs.

Activities / proposal

Chipping Barnet Library is a focal point of many community activities. The appearance of the building itself has won wide praise including an architectural design prize. However, SPACES feel that the garden surrounding the building has deteriorated to an extent that suggests a lack of care. The low surrounding fence had partly collapsed and the public take short cuts across the area. Their aim is to transform this area such that it is a pleasure to the eye and provides colour and interest throughout the year. This will have the effects of showing the building to its best advantage and giving the impression to both residents and visitors that High Barnet is a place where people care about their environment (notices will indicate that the garden is a volunteer initiative supported by the Library and Council).

Some of the specific objectives have already been met:

- (i) the library staff have been consulted and are most enthusiastic and supportive of the proposal.
- (ii) as a result of (i), the library staff have arranged (using the Library's budget) to have the collapsed fence removed and a path laid (termed a 'desire line' such that public will walk along the path and not across the planted areas). This was completed in mid September
- (iii) a professional garden designer has produced a planting plan, carefully designed for low maintenance, but to provide colour and interest during the four seasons of the year. This has been approved by the library staff.

The next stages are to prepare the ground, purchase shrubs and bulbs, plant and maintain. Financial support is needed for tools, shrubs, bulbs, etc.

The beneficiaries will be anyone who walks past, works in, or uses the Library.

How Micro Fund criteria are met

Relevant criteria are met

Fund criteria	Pass/fail	Comment
Explanation		
1 The application was received by the advertised deadline	N/A	No deadline is set in 2015/16
2 The proposal is from an appropriately constituted organisation or the applicant has an appropriate sponsor	Pass	SPACES is a constituted group
3. All sections of the application form have been adequately completed	Pass	
4 The grant requested is within the prescribed limits	Pass	
Supporting factors		
6 The proposal meets at least one of the Themes	Pass	Environment and Conservation theme
7 The budget is realistic and substantiated	Pass	Planting and equipment is listed
8 The proposal adequately addresses safeguarding issues	Pass	
Conflict with other funds		
If the application falls within the scope of any overlapping or complementary funding opportunities run by the council, the application may be (deemed to have failed and) referred to the apposite service without being scored.	Pass	Considered for Area Committee fund but Micro Fund application was in progress before the fund was launched

Benefits of the proposal to Barnet's local communities: Chipping Barnet library is a well used venue that offers a range of activities. Improving the outdoor space will improve the visual appeal and also highlight the community support for the activities that take place in the venue.

A new way of solving a local problem: In line with the council's adopt a street initiative the group propose that volunteers work to improve the appeal of a local resource. The Corporate Plan also states how it will be encouraging local volunteers to improve and care for their area by carrying out extra work which will make their neighbourhoods look more attractive. SPACES and the library are not aware of similar initiatives in the neighbourhood or other local libraries.

Evidence of demand: The group have secured support from Library staff and local residents that form their group.

Sustainability: The group have been running for 20 years and have secured 10 volunteers prepared to undertake the initial preparation of the ground and 5 to undertake periodic work to monitor and maintain the garden - most of us walk past it several times a week. Discussions with library staff have highlighted the need to liaise with the existing contractors who perform maintenance work at approximately 6-monthly intervals. This will take place immediately after planting. The intention is not to add to their workload (rather the reverse), but to ensure that they respect the new garden.

Evidence of community involvement- SPACES is a resident group- Membership of SPACES is open to anyone living in Alston, Calvert, Puller and Sebright Roads. It is also open to residents of other roads who have an interest in our area. SPACES will publicise the work through a twice yearly newsletter and inform other residents groups (The Barnet Society, Barnet Residents Association) how to act an example of how to participate in the local community.

Realistic project- The group have hired an expert gardener to advise on tools, planting and timescales. Should the weather turn before the group are able to plant they will defer until spring. The group have identified deliverability and maintenance risks and put mitigations in place. The group have worked in partnership with the Libraries Service.

Cost

£984.66

Grant recommendation

£984.66 (from Micro Fund)

Target grant outcomes

To improve the garden of Chipping Barnet Library using volunteer resources

Date: February 2014