

GRANT APPLICATION 2015/16 – ASSESSMENT AND RECOMMENDATION

Priority Corporate Outcomes	<p>To empower local residents and the community at large to play a more active role in improving their lives, local communities and public services</p> <p>To develop more innovative ways of maintaining parks and green spaces, including through greater partnerships with community groups</p> <p>To focus on using parks to achieve wider public health priorities for the borough, supporting residents to live as healthily and independently as possible</p>			
Organisation	FRIENDS OF CHILDS HILL PARK	<table border="1"> <tr> <td style="background-color: #cccccc;">ref</td> </tr> <tr> <td>158/G/ENV</td> </tr> </table>	ref	158/G/ENV
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Address	c/o 57a Dunstan Road, NW11			

Relevant policy, aims and objectives

The council is committed to maintaining Barnet as a place where people want to live and in which an active community can thrive. This includes protecting and enhancing the natural environment, recognising that parks and green spaces are amongst the borough's biggest assets. Strategic objectives include empowering residents to take on more personal and community responsibility for keeping Barnet a successful borough as part of the process of delivering more for less, including improving the local environment, and to look after their health and well-being through improvement in lifestyle. Making parks and green spaces more attractive places for physical activity, entertainment and play is one of the ways in which this may be achieved.

Activities / proposal

The Friends of Childs Hill Park (FCHP) is a registered charity with 200 members formed in 2013 by a group of local residents to improve and develop Childs Hill Park and encourage greater use of it. Operating under the auspices of the 'Adopt-a-Place Scheme', it is working on a comprehensive three-year improvement programme, being implemented in conjunction with the council's Green Spaces Team, which has included:

- * creation of a woodland border with 450 native trees and shrubs sourced from the Woodland Trust, planted by volunteers and local schoolchildren, and a community orchard, with a working group to maintain it;
- * transformation of a redundant and often waterlogged area of the park into a marsh garden, creating a safe and educational play space for the community;
- * installation of new children's playground equipment and an outdoor gym;
- * resurfacing of the major path through the park and removal of a large area of broken concrete, reseeded as a lawn;
- * provision of a family area with picnic, table tennis and chess tables;
- * new art workshops for children in the park's café.

A successful partnership has been formed with the Harington Scheme, a charity that trains and supports young people with learning difficulties or disabilities to find employment in the horticultural and land-based sectors, which helped with the new marsh garden, opened last month by the Deputy Mayor. Future plans include replanting to incorporate diverse species to attract local wildlife, and the installation of a new playground for toddlers.

The Green Spaces Team endorses the work of friends of parks groups like FCHP as an effective way of harnessing the talents and energy of local people in maintaining and improving parks and green spaces and securing external funding for those purposes. The marsh garden project successfully addressed a serious flooding problem in Childs Hill Park.

This application is for a grant to install a noticeboard in the vicinity of the children's playground, supplementing another one at the entrance on the other side of the park which the Green Spaces Team is providing.

The park at present has no noticeboards. FCHP currently publicises its activities by way of a newsletter to members and through local schools. The proposal will enable it to reach a far larger audience, promoting new and upcoming events and encouraging park users to volunteer, such as in regular volunteer-led activities like tidy-up or planting days or in future new projects, placing the park at the heart of the community.

Street Scene's Green Spaces Team supports the need for a second noticeboard on the basis that many users, especially parents with children, access the park from another entrance close to the playground and would not necessarily see the publicity elsewhere. Its only requirement is that the noticeboard matches the other and adheres to an approved corporate design, prompting the need for use of the same contractor.

Cost and financial need

FCHP has obtained grants from a number of sources in support of various elements of the three-year improvement programme. A one-off allocation of £50,488 from Street Scene's 2013/14 capital programme, linked to 'section 106' planning obligations, funded the upgrade of the children's playground. A corporate grant of £7,500 in 2014 supplemented a £50,000 Big Lottery ('People's Millions') grant for the marsh garden. The family area was created with a grant of £7,000 by the Trust for London. Saplings for the woodland border were donated by The Woodland Trust. A grant of £9,950 by the Hendon Area Committee earlier this year is earmarked for the new toddler playground. At 31/3/2015, FCHP had net current assets of £18,107, of which £17,450 were restricted funds, being grants received but not spent.

The supply, delivery and installation of the new noticeboard, based on a quotation obtained from the council's selected contractor, will cost £804, equal to the grant request.

FCHP also sought help in its application with the cost of publicising the opening ceremony of the marsh garden, but the date of receipt allowed insufficient time to obtain a decision before the event.

Grant recommendation, type and conditions

£800 (from former Borough Lottery Fund)

Start-up grant
One-off grant

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Special conditions:

Payment of the award should be made subject to an undertaking to notify installation of the noticeboard and to facilitate an inspection by the council.

Target grant outcomes

To promote and grow ownership of Childs Hill Park amongst the local community, both as users and volunteers.

Date: October 2015