

GRANT APPLICATION 2017/18 – ASSESSMENT AND RECOMMENDATION

Priority Corporate Outcomes	<p>To develop more innovative ways of maintaining parks and green spaces, including through greater partnerships with community groups</p> <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 support residents to live as healthily and independently as possible through increased physical activity</p>			
Organisation	FRIARY PARK BOWLING CLUB	<table border="1"> <tr> <td style="background-color: #cccccc;">ref</td> </tr> <tr> <td>147/C/SPO</td> </tr> </table>	ref	147/C/SPO
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Address	Friary Park, Friary Road, N12			
Relevant policy, aims and objectives				
<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 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.</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>				
Activities / proposal				
<p>Friary Park Bowling Club (FPBC) is an unincorporated association which has offered outdoor bowls facilities in Friary Park since its foundation in 1911. One of the longest established clubs in Great Britain, it has use of a green and a pavilion, 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 national governing body, the club has 30 members, mostly of mature years, and stages matches against other clubs between April and October each year, including an a well-supported annual competition, the Watkins Club, held in May. A variety of social events are held in the pavilion, primarily to assist in fundraising.</p> <p>In common with the six other bowls clubs in Barnet, FPBC 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, which has adopted a new constitution to facilitate discharge of its new responsibilities, will be awarded a lease of the green and the pavilion on terms to be negotiated. It proposes to retain the services of Green Spaces & Street Scene to maintain the green, for which it will pay the actual cost involved.</p> <p>This application seeks help to broaden use of the club's facilities, in particular by local schools, and make them more accessible to the general public, especially young people. It is proposing to provide bowls tuition to supervised groups of up to 20 students next season, commencing with year seven pupils at The Wren Academy, for which purpose it wishes to purchase 20 sets of junior bowls. Assistance is also sought to procure custom-made printed vinyl signage to be attached to the fences around the green, some for permanent display and others to promote particular events such as open days, in the interests of encouraging casual play, something that up to now only the council could authorise.</p>				

The continuing existence of bowls clubs (and bowling greens) contributes to the delivery of the health improvement agenda, both physically and psychologically, especially amongst older people and people with mental health problems. All of Barnet's bowls clubs, including FPBC, 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 2015/16, FPBC incurred expenditure of £6,119, of which £2,796 was the annual fee payable to the council for maintenance of the green and pavilion. The other main recurrent elements of its annual budget include affiliation fees, trophies, waste disposal, administration and insurance. Income is principally by way of an annual subscription payable by members, competition fees and fundraising. A small net profit is made on sales from the club's bar in the pavilion. An overall surplus of £1,060 in 2015/16 increased net current assets at 31/10/2016 to £5,655.

The outline budget for 2017/18, reflecting the new financial arrangements under discussion with the council whereby green maintenance will more than double in cost, is estimated to increase to £12,445, embracing also public utility costs (of £538), previously met by the council, and internal maintenance of the pavilion, which will be the club's responsibility. The club's reserves will help defray the increase pending implementation of a range of measures to boost income, including use of the pavilion by third parties and commercial sponsorship besides the imposition of a charge for casual users of the green.

A grant of £2,630 is sought towards the cost of 20 sets of junior bowls (£2,000) and 15 new vinyl signs (£630), in the latter case based on the cheapest quotation obtained.

The request is recommended for support in the context of how the transfer of management of bowls facilities to the clubs occupying 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.

Grant recommendation, type and conditions

£2,630 (from Edward Harvist Charity)

Start-up grant
One-off grant

Special conditions:

None.

Target grant outcomes

(a) To support Friary Park Bowls Club in assuming responsibility for managing the bowls facilities in Friary Park and (b) to enhance opportunities for engagement in physical activity in support of a healthy lifestyle.

Date: December 2017