

**GRANT APPLICATION 2017/18 – ASSESSMENT AND RECOMMENDATION**

<b>Priority Corporate Outcomes</b>	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 improve local people’s life opportunities and family and community wellbeing To support engaged, cohesive and safe communities and work with business and local communities to ensure that Barnet’s town centres benefit from growth	
<b>Organisation</b>	<b>VALUE YOU</b>	ref 373/C/UMB
<b>Address</b>	c/o Flat 31, Lambert House, Aytoun Road, SW9	

**Corporate policy, aims and objectives**

The council is seeking to develop new and effective partnerships to deliver high quality public services having regard particularly to the significant reduction in government funding. As part of the process of delivering more for less, the council is changing its relationship with residents such that they take on more personal and community responsibility for keeping Barnet a successful borough. The development of volunteering supports a range of strategic objectives, encouraging active citizenship; helping build social capital; and promoting pride in the borough through a sense of ownership and identification. It helps people to lead a fulfilling and healthy life; supports skills development; and provides routes into employment and career progression.

The Community Participation Strategy aims to increase the level of community activity across the borough; build stronger partnerships between the community and the council; and co-ordinate and improve the support the council gives to communities. The Entrepreneurial Barnet Strategy seeks to nurture the responsibilities of businesses to the local community.

**Activities / proposal**

Value You (VY) is a registered charity formed in 2013 which seeks to harness the support of communities and businesses to encourage and reward volunteering through a volunteer recognition scheme, working with businesses that want to help strengthen their local communities in the belief that they benefit from operating in a strong and stable local environment. The scheme, which has attracted media coverage across London, provides a 10%+ discount card, valid for two years, and two gift vouchers a year, such as for meals, flowers and beauty treatment, donated by local businesses, to people who have completed 100 hours of volunteering.

The scheme now operates in partnership with local volunteer agencies in twelve London boroughs, six mainly outer London authorities, including Barnet, having been added to an original complement that included Camden, Islington, Kensington & Chelsea and Westminster, where it is now well established, in 2016. Over 500 businesses, each with a promotional page on VY’s website to attract new customers from the local volunteering community, have joined the scheme, rewarding the work of nearly 1,000 volunteers attached to a diverse range of charities, voluntary groups, hospitals and schools.

The Department of Health’s strategic vision for volunteering (‘Social Action for Health & Wellbeing’) recognizes the need for volunteering activity to be recognized, celebrated and strengthened, a view supported by organizations and agencies participating in the scheme, which signify how it serves to promote volunteer wellbeing and recruitment; maintain volunteering on a regular basis rather than just the short-term; and build support amongst the local community for local independent businesses.

The scheme in Barnet has been promoted and supported by Groundwork (London), the council's contracted partner to empower local communities and promote volunteering, which assists in certifying qualifying volunteers. 36 businesses, including clothing retailers, cafés, bookshops and hair salons, have been recruited and 50 volunteers from 14 organizations signed up. The number of participating volunteers is short of the target of 100, however, mainly because more time and resources than expected have been spent on recruiting businesses. Help is sought to undertake a further round of promotion and engagement to address the shortfall and continue to grow the scheme, targeting not only volunteer managers in larger voluntary organizations but also networks such as Barnet Time Bank, Volunteering Matters and Jewish Volunteering and Ethical Business Networks.

The application is endorsed in the context of how the scheme raises the profile of, and celebrates, volunteering in line with best practice in volunteer management and in pursuit of the strategic vision of making Barnet a place where responsibility is shared. A condition of the grant recommended is that the further promotional work proposed also establishes links with council services that use volunteers, such as Adults & Communities' local area coordinators, Public Health's GP health champions, the partnership libraries and the youth parliament, and with the local private sector through an employability group coordinated by RE.

### Cost and financial need

VY's pre-audit accounts for the year ended 30/9/2017 show expenditure of £20,076, largely the cost of employing two part-time coordinators. The organisation has no premises overheads. Income of £34,023 was made up of a grant by a charitable trust towards core development costs and smaller awards, mostly in the sum of £4,368, by the six local authorities, including Barnet, which participated in the expansion of the scheme, each restricted to its roll-out in their area. VY had uncommitted reserves of £7,318 carried forward from 2015/16. The scheme's expansion was on the basis of apportioning a budget of £26,205 between the boroughs in question, factoring in economies of scale, principally to employ a project manager on a fixed-term contract to lead on implementation. Barnet's grant, awarded in October 2015, was released in two tranches, the second in July 2016.

VY anticipated generating sustainable income from advertising and marketing opportunities available to businesses taking part in the scheme once it had been scaled up sufficiently across London to defray estimated annual on-going costs of up to £750 per borough, expenditure that reflected voluntary input in each area. This remains the goal, but experience suggests that the timescale involved in scaling up makes this a medium-term ambition. The immediate strategy to improve sustainability in Barnet is to recruit and train two volunteers to work with volunteer managers to embed the scheme in their everyday processes and sign up more businesses.

The budget presented to re-promote the scheme locally, reaching out to more organisations and businesses and substantially increasing the number of registered volunteers, is in the sum of £3,903, equal to the grant request. This will cover staff time to coordinate and oversee the work of volunteers over the next twelve months; publicity; volunteer expenses; and overheads.

Although it is not the practice to help sustain projects awarded a start-up grant, the further award recommended in this case adds weight to the community participation strategy and signifies the council's ongoing commitment to encouraging volunteering.

### Grant recommendation, type and conditions

**£3,903**

Start-up grant

One-off grant

**Special conditions:**

Payment of the award should be made subject to (a) approval of a work plan to expand the scheme in Barnet over the next twelve months, to include the creation of links with council services using volunteers and the local private sector; (b) agreement of targets and milestones for monitoring purposes; and (c) the receipt of quarterly progress reports and an undertaking to provide an evaluation of the scheme's success in Barnet by December 2018.

**Target grant outcomes**

To reward, encourage and develop volunteering in conjunction with the local business community and build support within the community at large for local independent businesses.

<b>Date:</b>	January 2018
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