

GRANT APPLICATION 2018/19 – ASSESSMENT AND RECOMMENDATION

Priority Corporate Outcomes	To promote family and community well-being and encourage engaged, cohesive and safe communities To promote greater use of parks and green spaces for the enjoyment of residents	
Organisation	EAST BARNET COMMUNITY FESTIVAL	ref 110/C/LAA
Address	c/o 21 Church Hill Road, East Barnet	

Corporate policy, aims and objectives

The council is committed to promoting civic pride; to facilitating the conditions where an active and diverse community can thrive; and to ensuring that Barnet remains a harmonious and cohesive place in which to live. Extending community involvement in arts and recreational activities is an effective means of promoting social integration; building community cohesion; and generating pride in the borough. Community festivals traditionally involve local people taking responsibility for their community and serve to give opportunities to residents to celebrate what they have achieved and bring different parts of the community together.

Parks and green spaces are amongst the borough’s greatest assets. Greater utilisation of them for physical activity, entertainment and play encourages residents to take on more responsibility for helping maintain the fabric of the borough and to look after their health and well-being through improvement in lifestyle, both strategic corporate objectives.

Activities / proposal

Begun in 1995, EBCF takes place annually in Oak Hill Park, East Barnet. It attracts up to 20,000 people each year, depending on the weather. Designed to appeal to whole families, a range of activities involving a wide cross section of the community includes live music and dance, combining both displays and participatory events. Up to 1,000 local people perform at the festival each year. Entertainment is provided on two open stages and in marquees and is complemented by (up to 100) open-air stalls hired by local voluntary and community groups and businesses to promote their activities or raise funds. There is also a commercial funfair.

Attendance at the festival last year was once again close to the record figures in 2014 and 2015, good weather having complemented a wide range of musical entertainment, from rock music to big swing bands; traditional and contemporary dance displays offering audience participation; and entertainment for children and young people, including participatory events. Respondents to an annual visitor survey signify widespread enjoyment of the event.

This year’s festival runs from Friday 6th to Sunday 8th July. The programme will once again include an eclectic mix of live music, including rock, pop, Caribbean and dance music, many of the 50 bands engaged performing at the festival for the first time; East Barnet Orchestra, a product of Barnet Education Arts Trust’s Saturday schools; other young musicians from East Barnet Music Centre; a stage devoted to new local talent; acrobatic groups; ten local dance troupes; a food fair; a classic car show; and features tailored towards family groups. Three local churches will collaborate in delivering a ‘Songs of Praise’ event on the final day.

The organisers are also staging, as they have since 2006, a ‘Theatre in the Park’ (TITP) programme on seven Sundays before and after the festival, presenting plays by professional touring companies in the woodland arena in the park, attracting weekly audiences of up to 200.

The festival, one of Barnet's largest community events, reaches out to a large volume of people at relatively little expense, with significant voluntary input and the need for only a modest subsidy, and encourages greater use and appreciation of a large Barnet green space. It is considered to offer good value for money, organised, as it is, on an entirely voluntary basis, with many acts performing for free in return for publicity. It offers a showcase for local talent and stimulates interest in the arts and in the local community. The programme for children and young people complements the strategy of engaging them in positive activities.

Although the green spaces team continues to work with the organisers in the lead up to each year's event, such as in planning the layout of the site and adherence to health and safety legislation, the council discontinued its input into arranging activities several years ago.

Cost and financial need

The budget for the three-day 2018 festival estimates expenditure to be £44,863, of which £23,700 is for the hire or purchase of equipment, stages, marquees, furniture and toilets, including a replacement for the smaller of the two stages, loaned at no cost by the council for many years or more recently for a fee by Barnet Community Projects, but now deemed unsafe to use. The balance includes publicity and advertising; insurance; security; cleaning and other site costs; the reimbursement of some performers' out-of-pocket expenses; and administrative expenses. Income is by way of hire charges for stalls; concessions, such as for the funfair and catering; brochure advertisements; a grant by a local charity; and commercial sponsorship. Total estimated revenue is £41,450, resulting in a pre-grant shortfall of £3,413.

A grant of £2,600 is requested, of which £800 is to defray the additional cost of hiring the second stage. A further £300 sought for a new gazebo is for the TITP programme, not the festival, placing it outside the scope of this application.

The council has supported the festival with an annual grant since its inception, reduced in 2017 to £1,500 from a maximum sum of £2,500. The Chipping Barnet Area Committee additionally funded features for children in 2015 and subsidised admission to a family circus held separately in 2016, when there was an additional corporate grant of £500 for fire-fighting equipment. The accounts for 2017 show that a surplus of £2,505 was made on last year's festival and a loss of £1,634 on the TITP programme, increasing reserves by £871 to £2,994.

The award recommended uplifts last year's grant on a one-off basis by £500 in support of the additional financial pressure of procuring staging.

Grant recommendation, type and conditions

£2,000

Start-up grant

One-off grant

Special conditions:

None.

Target grant outcomes

To encourage social integration and community cohesion through access to recreational activities for all members of the family, expanding upon the use of public green spaces.

Date: June 2018