

Date of Meeting: 21st April 2022

Brookfield Community Garden – National Lottery grant application

1. Purpose of Report

To consider proposals for the application of a grant to the National Lottery to fund a part time fixed term contract employee to project manage the Community Garden at Brookfield.

2. Background

Over 12 months ago the Town Council agreed to provide an allotment free of charge to a group of volunteers with the vision to create a growing for health community garden which enabled volunteers from Sustainable Nantwich, Friends of Brookfield Park and allotment holders to begin the transformation of the allotment space into a community growing hub.

3. Considerations

For the project to meet its full potential a project manager is needed to support the plan of creating a fully accessible wildlife community garden, ultimately contributing to community resilience, improved sustainability and reduction in carbon. The project will present opportunities for improved health and well-being, becoming a green social prescription, with referral pathways identified and linked to established partners, whilst providing access to various new and established green volunteering experiences and community support activities.

The next phase is about how our greenspace projects can develop into a network to unlock the benefits of community gardening for all. The responsibility for managing the garden, the growing calendar, the project, volunteers and activities is extremely demanding, so it's crucial we're able to support both the volunteer project leaders, the community of volunteers and residents that have already come to rely on our garden and greenspace projects.

Residents across all age ranges will benefit from this project, including children on school educational visits, through to older people in retirement, and will welcome people from marginalised groups including patients referred by NHS partners experiencing low mood, loneliness, anxiety, depression, or poor mental health. The project will also reach new residents in the area needing to find friends. Lastly those needing to improve their physical activity levels regardless of age and mobility – all achievable through free green social prescription activities and enjoyment of being immersed in a tranquil, safe friendly environment, where our focus is friendship building and offering social opportunities within our natural spaces.

Successful funding would enable the employment of a professional coordinator to maximise the 'collective' energies of environmental/community groups, with a base at the community garden.

Funding would enable the coordinator to:

- Provide administration/social media support
- Implement good governance and safeguarding consistence's across the projects
- Co-ordinate referrals, visitors welcome, and induction
- Organise garden and green spaces volunteer rotas and use by different groups
- Build a strong partnership network
- Support volunteer recruitment/development and training
- Develop a package of experience/learning opportunities e.g. how to make a bee hotel, how to conserve water.

Expected outcomes:

Contribute to the following impact

- Reduce isolation
- Improve mental wellness
- Reduce the impact on other support services through connectivity with nature and the green spaces
- Upskill volunteers
- Educate and create a greater awareness

If the application with the National Lottery is successful, the appointed project manager would need to be employed. Members are asked to consider allowing the Town Council to act as the employer which will provide the appointed individual the benefits of relevant HR policies and procedures. It will also ensure that the funding is managed effectively and transparently by the Town Council.

If the Town Council were to act as the employer, it would not have any direct costs associated with the role as this would be covered by the grant funding.

4. Recommendations

4.1 That members approve the application of the grant and if successful act as the employer for the appointed project manager.

5. Financial Implications

There would be no direct employee costs as these would be covered by the grant funding.

6. Equalities Impact

The project is aimed at all ages and abilities and those from marginalized groups including patients referred by NHS partners.

7. Personnel Implications

The Town Council would act as the employer providing the appointed applicant with the assurance of a good employer with the relevant policies and procedures in place.

8. Environmental implications

The project will contribute to community resilience, with improved sustainability and carbon footprint.

9. Consultation

n/a

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