

Report of the Deputy Chief Executive

GRANT AID REQUESTS – CANALSIDE HERITAGE CENTRE1. Purpose of report

To consider requests for revenue and capital grant aid in accordance with the provisions of the Council's grant aid policy.

2. Grant Aid Application

An application for both revenue and capital funding has been received from the Canalside Heritage Centre (CHC).

Firstly, CHC has requested revenue grant funding towards the cost of three essential staff employed by the charitable trust that are currently funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund (ending April 2020). The total cost of these posts is £60,313 and CHC has requested a grant of £48,250 to meet 80% of these employee costs in 2020/21. The remaining cost will be met by the charitable trust. Further details are provided in the appendix.

Secondly, CHC has requested capital funding towards its *Arts Ark* project to establish a fully DDA compliant pontoon with access ramp at the front of the Heritage Centre. The total cost of Phase 1 of the project is £38,241 and CHC has requested £10,000 towards the scheme. Details are in the appendix.

Given the nature of these capital schemes, any approved grant would normally be given on the basis of 25% of the actual costs incurred (given that it would relate to a non-Council owned asset) with a maximum figure specified in appropriate circumstances.

3. Financial Position

There are insufficient funds available within the grant aid budget to support this request in full (particularly given the other requests considered elsewhere on this agenda). Furthermore, no funds are available from the Council's 2019/20 revenue contingencies which have been fully committed.

No budgetary provision exists for capital grants to voluntary organisations. No funds are available from the Council's 2019/20 capital contingencies which have been fully committed.

Recommendation

The Committee is asked to CONSIDER the requests and RESOLVE accordingly.

Background papers – Nil

APPENDIX

CANALSIDE HERITAGE CENTREBackground

The Canalside Heritage Centre (CHC) was set up in 2011 and registered as a charity in 2014. CHC is based at the Weir Cottages at Beeston Lock.

Established in 2011 by a group of dedicated local people, the aim of the Canalside Heritage Centre (CHC) charitable trust has been to renovate and restore the Weir Cottages at Beeston Lock into sustainable use as a heritage, educational and arts centre for all. The cottages have a rich and varied history having been lived in by families who worked on the canal over 200 years. Thanks to the generous support of the Heritage Lottery Fund, Canal and River Trust and other funders, partners and volunteers, the cottages were sensitively renovated and the Centre was successfully opened to the public in June 2017.

Aims, Objectives and Activities

The charitable objectives of CHC are for the public benefit, the advancement of education and the preservation of historical heritage by the construction, management and maintenance of a heritage museum, resource centre and exhibition gallery in Beeston. The specific charitable aims are to:

- Renovate and restore four derelict cottages into sustainable use as a heritage, educational and arts centre for the use of the local community, schools and general public.
- Provide a museum that will detail and highlight the heritage of the area, by accurately reflecting the historical significance and importance of the lock keeper's house, cottages, the canal network and their relationship with the development of Beeston Rylands.
- Provide a learning centre for use by locals, historians and artists to pass on relevant skills, knowledge and memories via interviews, lectures and visual presentations.
- Set up an allotment on existing kitchen garden land, adjacent to the cottages, for local schools to grow their own produce and to provide opportunities to learn about the history of allotments and food production.
- Make the centre a sustainable stand-alone project by renting/leasing designated, commercially viable space.

The main activities include interpreting the heritage of the local waterways through exhibitions, talks, community events and a wide variety of family activities. The facilities include a tearoom and gift shop; learning spaces for groups and schools; opportunities for research into waterways heritage; community open days and events; volunteering and training opportunities; and a community garden which is maintained by volunteers and local groups. CHC is also dedicated to telling the story of the social history of the area, which is interpreted through the exhibitions, activities and workshops.

Visitor numbers are captured using an automated counter at the main entrance and by conducting regular visitor surveys. The activities both onsite and offsite are enjoyed by a broad range of the local community. In 2018/19 there was 61,206 visitors of all ages to the Centre, 73% of whom came from Broxtowe (postcodes NG9, NG8 and NG16 collected through surveys). Admission is free, although some events have a small charge to cover the cost of equipment and materials.

CHC provides a range of activities which are designed to improve the health and wellbeing. These include a weekly veterans group, fortnightly friends through social change group and a sound walk for full-time carers. The Centre is an open and friendly environment for people to use. Many of its most active volunteers began volunteering because they had experienced a change in their lives and wished to keep active and meet new people. CHC runs a fortnightly Classic Film Club in association with the Beeston Rylands Community Association for isolated and vulnerable people to spend time with friends.

CHC offers volunteering and work experience opportunities for people with autism, learning disabilities and other conditions which may mean they find it difficult to find employment. In the past year CHC has welcomed eight new volunteers and three new work placement students from local colleges. CHC wants to build on its work and offer even more to disadvantaged sections of the local community but need support in core funding in order to do this.

Financial Context

CHC provided its financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2019 for scrutiny. Total annual income amounted to £61,291 from grants (the majority being restricted funds), donations and rental income. The principal grant funding sources in 2018/19 were from the Heritage Lottery Fund (£33,017), The Co-Operative (£4,296), The Postcode Lottery (£1,750), Grosseteste University (£1,000) and John Lewis (£1,000). CHC also received donations from its wholly owned trading subsidiary, CHC Beeston Enterprises Limited trading subsidiary of £14,594. Total expenditure of £114,415 related to charitable activities, governance costs and depreciation. CHC employed an average of 12 persons (including directors) during the year (up from 10 in 2018) with employee costs being £53,145 (£41,514 - 2018).

The balances carried forward as at 31 March 2019 was £788,455 (£787,195 restricted). Cash and bank balances as at 31 March 2019 was £15,004. The Trustees considered the level of reserves held by CHC to be satisfactory to enable it to continue its current activities. At the year-end its trading company, CHC Beeston Enterprises Limited, owed CHC £20,187 (£12,917 in 2018). This loan is interest free and is repayable in demand.

Revenue Grant

CHC has requested core funding towards three essential staff posts employed by the charitable trust, namely the Operations Manager, Development Officer and Education and Community Engagement Officer. The anticipated total cost of these posts in 2020/21 is £60,313 including oncosts. Currently, 80% of this cost is provided by restricted grant from the National Lottery Heritage Fund. This funding stream ends in April 2020.

In order to continue and build upon current activities, CHC needs financial support to fund these posts. CHC has therefore applied to the Council for a revenue grant of £48,250 to meet 80% of these employee costs in 2020/21. The remaining cost will be met by the charitable trust.

CHC has stated that if its funding request for 80% of these costs was unsuccessful, it would see both the Development Officer and Education and Community Engagement Officer posts discontinued as these cannot currently be afforded without external support. The Operations Manager post would continue as it is essential for the Heritage Centre to remain open. However, without the other two posts the Heritage Centre would operate solely as a café and shop as there would not be the capacity to continue work with the local community, such as the education programme, health and wellbeing activities and future projects.

For the long term sustainability, CHC is currently working towards National Portfolio Organisation (NPO) status with the Arts Council England. This would provide core funding for four years and come into effect in 2022/23. CHC is also putting together a fundraising strategy to fund these posts in 2021/22. In the meantime, CHC needs capacity in 2020/21 to implement the strategy and develop the NPO application, making the success of this request essential to the future sustainability of CHC charitable work with the residents of Broxtowe.

Capital Grant

CHC has also submitted a capital grant application for funding towards its *Arts Ark* project. The Arts Ark will establish a pontoon with access ramp at the front of the Centre and a floating arts project in the form of a renovated narrowboat. This will be an extension of the work of CHC, with a particular focus on the arts. Through an exciting programme of activities, the boat will transport and deliver the arts to local communities, enabling people to engage with CHC and the waterways in innovative and creative ways.

The project will be a link between the land and the waterways connecting the two through a broad range of art activities. It will physically move between rural and urban Nottinghamshire allowing influences and culture to mix and migrate. Core activities will be community based, with the opportunity for additional commercial projects to provide sustainability and enjoyment for all.

This funding request is for phase 1 of the project, being the installation of a DDA compliant and accessible pontoon, access path and ramp in the lock to the front of the Centre. CHC will benefit through the restoration of the historic lock to the front of the Centre. The pontoon will provide the only fully accessible mooring at Beeston Lock meaning that partners, such as the Nottingham Narrowboat Project, can bring a more diverse range of groups for education workshops.

The successful completion of phase 1 will allow CHC to pursue phase 2; the renovation of a narrowboat into a floating arts facility to take activities out to communities along the river and canal.

This will reach a wider range of audiences and also benefit the local residents through skills development opportunities, health and wellbeing activities and education workshops. The project will enhance the green infrastructure and encourage more use of Beeston Lock, canal and river.

The total cost of phase 1 is £38,241. A quote has been received from a company specialising in waterways improvements to carry, supply and fix the access ramp and to fix the pontoon in place. The pontoon will be donated by the Canal and River Trust.

CHC has been successful in a bid for £14,184 from the Nottinghamshire County Council Local Improvement Scheme. It has also applied for £14,057 from the National Lottery Community Fund and expect to have a decision on this application in December 2019. Further match funding has been provided by the donation of a pontoon by Canal & River Trust valued at £11,000.

Summary

CHC has requested two separate applications for grant funding from the Council.

1. A revenue request for £48,250 to meet 80% of the cost of three dedicated employee posts in 2020/21, which were previously part-funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

This is a considerable request and there are insufficient funds available within the grant aid budget to support the full award, particularly given the other requests considered elsewhere on this agenda. If Members were minded to award a revenue grant to CHC then an allocation from the Council's revenue contingencies would likely be required.

Members should note that the grant aid policy requires that grant awards of £5,000 or above may be subject to a Service Level Agreement.

2. A capital funding request towards phase 1 of the Arts Ark project to establish a pontoon with access ramp at the front of the Centre. The total cost of phase 1 is £38,241 and CHC has requested £10,000 towards the scheme.

No budgetary provision exists for capital grants to voluntary organisations and an allocation from Capital Contingencies would be required if a grant were to be awarded. Any approved grant would normally be given on the basis of 25% of actual costs incurred (given that it relates to a non-Council asset) with a maximum figure specified in appropriate circumstances.