

14 September 2020

Councillor Community Fund

Since 1 April 2020, a total of £34,274 has been spent by councillors on supporting the delivery of positive outcomes in their wards. £16,200 of the total has funded organisations that are directly supporting those most vulnerable in our communities as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Additional funding available, £2,000 for each Councillor, to directly support groups/organisations that have suffered loss or have not been able to fund raise as a direct result of the COVID-19 Pandemic. Nine applications have been supported to the value of £4,250.

Northampton Community Resilience Hub

Total requests for support through the Northampton Community Resilience Hub totals 1,139. We are continuing to see a decline in referrals and averaging between 5-10 new referrals a week.

Breakdown of the figures include:

62% food (collection, parcels, shopping), 27% prescriptions, 6% loneliness, 2% support to get online and 3% other.

Recovery plan is in place with partners, which focuses on mental health, food provision, infrastructure support for the newly formed pop up groups, the capacity of the volunteers and a community place-based pilot.

The Community Safety and Engagement Team have been supporting the community engagement actions, related to the local outbreak, sharing messages across our community engagement networks, on how to self-isolate, car sharing, testing, face coverings and how to keep yourself and others safe. Community leaders have supported in getting these messages translated, in a variety of different languages, which can be accessed via: <https://www.northampton.gov.uk/latestcovid19advice>

Forums

International Youth Day celebrated by Youth Forum virtually on Wednesday 12 August and joined by the Mayor, Cllr Brian Sargeant.

Events – To provide clarity for event organisers, support government guidance regarding preventing the spread of the virus and minimising the risk of local outbreaks, all events that could potentially attract over 30 participants have been cancelled and will not be permitted for the remainder of the year. Event applications are still coming through, all are being assessed and smaller events granted permission if suitable risk assessments are provided. Examples of events denied permission are:

- Darkness into Light from McCarthy Dixon Foundation. Racecourse (no date given)
- Working Horse Demo from Mavis Wilmhurst. Hunsbury Hill Country Park – 20 September
- Charity Fair from Ioana Mihai. Racecourse – 22 August.

Culture & Heritage

Due to the local Covid-19 situation in Northampton the reopening of Abington Park Museum was delayed from early August to the end of month. A review of safe working practices and procedures for opening the museum in line with government and museum sector guidance has resulted in revised opening hours of Saturday and Sunday due to additional member of staff required to open safely to visitors and staff. The museum has attained the 'We're Good To Go' industry standard and supporting mark, meanings the museum can demonstrate we are adhering to the respective Government and public health guidance, have carried out a COVID-19 risk assessment and check have the required processes in place.

Museum Expansion Project

The final elements of building and snagging works are almost completed by Wildgoose Construction Ltd. A two-week deep clean of the building was undertaken and exhibition installation has now begun. Installation progress under Covid 19 safe working conditions is being monitored to determine if there is any impact on programme under these new and untested working conditions.

Customer Services – In preparation for increased impact on the Contact centre due to increased debt and homelessness, we are planning to increase online contact and with support from Communications we have organised our 'Save time – do it on-line strapline. This has been added to the email signature and our online services have also been promoted on social media and within the messages on the ACD (Automated Call Distribution).



Due to the changing world that we are in we are planning for an increased in anxiety, frustrations and aggression and have arranged refresher training for all frontline staff to cover the following techniques:

- Diffusing conflict/difficult situations
- Best practice when dealing with angry residents
- Defensiveness- how to deal with it
- How best to explain news that you feel will not be received well
- Conflict Management and dealing with difficult situations/customers effectively
- How to respond when dealing with sensitive issues
- Understanding where the customer is coming from

Community Safety and Anti-Social Behaviour

Community Safety Strategy for 2020-2022, has now been finalised and approved by the Community Safety Partnership – final copy can be viewed at: <https://www.northampton.gov.uk/downloads/download/3447/northampton-community-safety-plan-2020---2022>

£550,000 secured through the Safer Streets Fund, which is a Home Office grant scheme, launched formally in early 2020. An application was submitted for Northampton via the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioners Office. The funding will allow us to extend our CCTV network to cover key sites across the area, which stretches from the inner ring road to Northampton School for Boys, between Wellingborough Road and Bedford Road.

It will also allow us to introduce measures on the Bouverie Estate, such as removal of walls to eliminate hiding places, and introduction of fencing around gardens to make them more secure. We will also look to install cycle parking facilities across the area and carry out a campaign of community engagement to increase understanding of home security and engagement with Neighbourhood Watch.

Bike Marking Events - 6 August; between 40-50 bikes marked at Midsummer meadows,

9 August - Bike marking event in Abington Park, 53 bikes marked – also used the opportunity on both occasions to distribute the COVID-19 leaflets – offering advice to the public on how to stay safe.

Partnership Community Engagement days with the Police and Northampton Partnership Homes throughout August – to build community resilience and deliver community safety messages in Thorplands, Ecton Brook, Bellinge and Blackthorn.

PSPO application to be progressed to gate a public highway between Dunster Street and St Michael's Road, where there are high levels of ASB and criminal activity taking place.

Work to start in the coming weeks on the Skate Park at Lings Wood – Contractor now appointed.

There are currently 12 active cases being managed by the Anti-Social Behaviour Case Managers:

1 x Community Protection Warning has been issued due to persistent targeting of businesses, refusing to leave and being verbally abusive.

1 x gang related Criminal Behaviour Order is in court in September as well as 3 x Serious Crime Prevention Orders which the ASB Case Managers have helped to put together in partnership with the police.

2 x Criminal Behaviour Orders are currently being put together for persistent offenders causing issues in the town centre.

1 x partial closure order application submitted and temporarily granted (in relation to drug dealing, drug taking and ASB) – full hearing to take place in the next few weeks

Councillor Anna King
Cabinet Member for Community Engagement & Community Safety