

Town Centre Events Programme Final Evaluation

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Purpose of the Report

To inform Members of the evaluation of the Town Centre Grants programme.

Public Interest

The Town Centre Events Programme was allocated £4,500 ring-fenced from Christmas parking savings to fund new events and activities to stimulate footfall and participation in the Area West town centres of Crewkerne, Chard and Ilminster. Applications were invited in two calls from between September 2017 and February 2018. Applications were assessed and offers made at the end of each call. This report informs Members of the results of the evaluation from the projects that were funded.

Recommendation

That Members note the content of the report.

Background

The Town Centre Events Programme (TCEP) was requested by Area West Members, developed by the Area West Development team under Area Lead Zoe Harris and approved by Area West Committee in August 2017.

The programme was created to fund new events and activities to stimulate footfall and participation in the town centres of Crewkerne, Chard and Ilminster. It was allocated a budget of £4,500 ring-fenced from Christmas parking savings in the three towns. The process was based on the existing community grants process with the requirement for 50% match funding removed and funding decisions delegated to Area West Development officers. Grants were capped at £1,500

Over the 2 calls 5 grants were allocated. All of those who applied for a grant were successful but most got less than applied for to ensure the funds went as far as possible.

Organisation	Activity / Event	Total Project Cost	Amount requested	Amount awarded
Chard Town Team	Children's Christmas event	£340	£340	£282
Chard Town Council	A month of Saturdays	£1650	£1650	£1000
Crewkerne Rotary	Bartholomew's Fair – Live Music	£950	£950	£750
ABCD (Creative Crewkerne)	Pom Pom opening event	£1477	£1477	£1328
Crewkerne Town Council (Crewkerne in Bloom)	Crewkerne in Bloom	£1825	£1825	£1057

All of the events have now taken place, apart from the Month of Saturdays event. Chard Town Council had intended to have a series of cultural and creative events / attractions on the high street on consecutive Saturdays in May of this year. However, due to staff shortages this was postponed. The Town Council were given the opportunity to run the event later or to propose another event. A proposal has been received and accepted for an event to be held in December – ‘Chard Goes Global’.

Chard Town Council	Chard Goes Global	£1150	£1000	£1000
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Of the other events the grants were very well received. Feedback has been that it would either not have been possible to run the event at all (e.g. Crewkerne in Bloom or the Pom Pom opening event) or that the existing event was greatly enhanced by having the grant (in the case of the live music for St Bartholomew’s Fair)

Whilst the events / activities were well attended it has not been possible to say that the grant specifically increased the footfall in the town centres. Feedback would suggest that too many other factors come into play including weather, TV listings etc.

In hindsight the amount of grant available (max of £1500) and for a one off activity would not necessarily increase footfall in the town centres. For example Yeovil have worked hard over the last few years with a much bigger resource to establish the ‘Super Saturday’ event.

Despite this there is little doubt that the grants programme has helped to enhance community events and activities across Chard and Crewkerne

Financial Implications

There was a very slight underspent for this grants programme of £83. This will be absorbed into the Community Grants Programme.

Council Plan Implications

The SSDC Council Plan 2016 – 2021 states:

Focus on economy: “We will work with businesses and use our assets to grow our economy.”

Focus on Heath and communities: “Support communities so that they can identify their needs and develop local solutions.”

Carbon Emissions and Climate Change Implications

None directly arising from this report.

Equality and Diversity Implications

Rural communities are vulnerable to isolation from services & markets and face higher transport costs. This programme provides an opportunity to support locally important economic initiatives.

Privacy Impact Assessment

None directly arising from this report.

Background Papers

Report to Area West Committee ‘Town Centre Events Programme’ August 2017.
