

COMMITTEE: NORTH EAST AREA

REF NO: NEAC/18/07

DATE: 14 JUNE 2018

**SUBJECT: IPSWICH WOMEN'S FESTIVAL GROUP –
WOMEN'S VOICES, WOMEN'S VOTES 100 YEARS ON**

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Short description of report content and the decision requested:

This report requests a funding contribution from each Area Committee towards the cost of the Ipswich Women's Festival Group project to celebrate 100 years of the women's vote. Area Committee funding will support activities such as EqualiTeas, pop up exhibitions, craft events and a suffrage reconstruction. The amount requested from the North East Area Committee is £878.91.

List of Appendices included in this report:

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This report was prepared after consultation with:

External consultees

- *Julie Evans – Ipswich Women's Festival Group*
- *Pat Dobson – Ipswich Women's Festival Group*

The following policies form a context to this report:

(all relevant policies must also be referred to in the body of the report)

- *Building a Better Ipswich 2017*
- *Area Committee Action Plans*

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report requests a funding contribution from each Area Committee towards the cost of the Ipswich Women's Festival Group project to celebrate 100 years of the women's vote. Area Committee funding will support activities such as EqualiTeas, pop up exhibitions, craft events and a suffrage reconstruction.
- 1.2 The amount requested from the North East Area Committee is £878.91.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Ipswich Women's Festival Group is a constituted organisation which aims to promote women's achievements in social, cultural and political endeavours by:
- Carrying out research focused on learning about women in Ipswich and the surrounding areas who have made a significant contribution in their field benefiting the local community and beyond, and who in many cases have been 'hidden from history'
 - Developing resources to ensure information is readily available
 - Organising events to share information and ideas about women's achievements in an inclusive and enjoyable way
 - Promoting and networking with other groups
- 2.2 The Ipswich Women's Festival Group has established a network of local organisations and individual women under the banner of 'Women's Voices, Women's Votes – 100 years on', to plan events across the town to celebrate the centenary of the first women gaining the right vote. The aims of this particular project are:
- To celebrate the struggle and sacrifices made by suffrage campaigners to win the right for women to vote;
 - To encourage more women to use their hard-won vote, especially those least likely to exercise this right;
 - To inspire women of all generations to become politically active in their local community;
 - To raise awareness of the continued fight for gender equality in the UK;
 - To network and connect local organisations and charities working for and with women and girls;
 - To establish a legacy plan to ensure the network of local organisations and community champions continue to work together to remove barriers to women's participation in public life, and
 - To add to the documented history of women's contribution to local and national movements and campaigns.

- 2.3 The Group intends to host a celebratory day event in October to raise awareness, promote discussion amongst the local community and make plans for increasing opportunities for women. The event is intended to feature keynote speakers and involve a programme of talks designed to inspire, inform and encourage reflection and debate by prominent local women from all sectors of society. Speakers from business, political and charitable backgrounds will deliver short, powerful speeches, in the style of Technology, Entertainment, Design (TED). Local women and girls will also deliver informal talks around the topics of equality and politics, and workshops aimed at sharing experiences and ideas. This event will take place at the University's Waterfront Building and the Group hopes to attract at least 300 attendees.
- 2.4 A specially commissioned drama, written by an Ipswich based young women's theatre company, will be performed at the event before it is toured to community venues. Banners, quilts and placards, craft workshops, singing and spoken word/poetry will also feature on the day, along with an EqualiTea (see 2.6), to bring together the different community events being held across the town over the summer period.
- 2.5 The Group hopes to also include film and photographic activities at the event, and is currently in talks with the Pacitii Company to discuss how they can link in with the SPILL festival. This will likely be through a facilitated 'think tank' session to evaluate the event and build the sustainability of networks. The Group would also like to be involved with several of the planned SPILL events that specifically focus on women and/or gender issues.
- 2.6 In the lead up to the main event, the Group plans to hold a succession of EqualiTeas across Ipswich. Central government, as a way of celebrating the 1928 Equal Franchise, is promoting EqualiTeas, which aim to bring different community groups together over tea, coffee and cake to share stories, generate debate and explore hopes, concerns and aspirations. Resource packs are available with ideas for games and discussion topics; however, no associated funding is available. Attendees will have the opportunity to create pennants, placards and banners to bring to the main festival event.
- 2.7 The Group intends to hold a minimum of ten EqualiTeas. At present, they have agreements for EqualiTeas to be held in partnership with the following organisations: Lighthouse Women's Refuge, Castle Hill Community Centre, Karibu, Suffolk Mind, Bangladeshi Support Centre, Gainsborough Community Library, Inspire Suffolk and ActivLives.
- 2.8 The Group envisage EqualiTeas as being a key vehicle for going out and hearing directly from people across the borough about their cares, concerns and hopes for gender equality and greater participation in civic life.

- 2.9 A local girls project run by Future Female Society, which helps young women and girls gain skills in the media industry, will record some of the EqualiTeas as part of a radio/oral project and the resulting collage of voice, quotes and photography will form a 'vox pop' to be exhibited at the main event.
- 2.10 Associated activities planned by the Group include work with young people and schools exploring issues through discussion and drama. Banner making has attracted interest locally and participation is planned in the prestigious 'Processions' event taking place on 10th June, when women and girls in Belfast, Cardiff, Edinburgh and London will walk together as part of a celebratory mass participation artwork. Through the event, one hundred women artists are being commissioned to work with organisations and communities across the UK to create one hundred centenary banners as part of an extensive public programme of creative workshops. 'Processions' will be coming to Ipswich as part of the SPILL festival, so women from local Ipswich groups are already getting involved in making banners and contributing to events in London and beyond.
- 2.11 Thanks to the Group's efforts towards this project thus far, 'The Women's Quilt' will be brought to Ipswich. The quilt was made in Nottingham and has already been exhibited in London and is described as 'the most beautiful object that shouldn't exist', since it commemorates women killed by their partners between the years 2009 – 2015.
- 2.12 The Area Committees are asked to contribute towards a Suffrage Reconstruction in the town centre, one or two days prior to the festival day. On this day, there will also be a decorated polling booth where people can learn about voting, and contrast who can vote now compared with 100 years ago. The polling booth is being provided by Ipswich Borough Council's Electoral Services. The event will link Ipswich's suffrage history with the current need for engagement in the democratic process.
- 2.13 The network is new but has already been successful in mobilising and inspiring local women to join together. They intend to take forward the energy and commitment this initiative has generated into 2019 and beyond and the 'think tank after the main event will be a part of how they jointly agree their priorities and plan future projects.
- 2.14 The Women's Festival Group has previously been supported by the Council through the funding and publication of the Ipswich Women's History Trail, which was launched in 2012, and is sold via the Tourist Information Office. It continues to attract positive feedback from members of the public and it provides an opportunity to discover how women have contributed through the ages to all aspects of Ipswich life. There has been particular interest in the work discovering the local

suffrage activity in the town and public events to learn about these women have been well attended.

- 2.15 The Group has also successfully increased the number of women recognised through the Blue Plaques scheme across the town, in conjunction with Ipswich Borough Council and the Ipswich Society.
- 2.16 The Area Committees are asked to consider funding for EqualiTeas, pop-up exhibitions, & a suffrage campaign reconstruction as part of the main celebration event and for craft events as part of the 'Procession' event. A breakdown of costs is given in Section 9.
- 2.17 The total request to the North East Area Committee is for £878.91.

3. Relevant Policies AND Area Action considerations

- 3.1 Building a Better Ipswich 2017 underlying principles:
 - A Strong Ipswich Economy
 - An Enjoyable Place to Live, Work and Study
- 3.2 To alleviate deprivation in the following domains as identified as priorities in the Area Committee Action Plans:
 - Living Environment
 - Health and Disability
 - Education, Skills and Training

4. Options Considered / Under Consideration

- 4.1 Option 1 – Approve funding of £878.91 towards the cost of the Ipswich Women's Festival Group project to celebrate 100 years of the women's vote.
- 4.2 Option 2 – Approve funding of an amount less than £878.91 towards the cost of the Ipswich Women's Festival Group project to celebrate 100 years of the women's vote.
- 4.3 Option 3 – Do not fund.

5. Consultations

- 5.1 To date, there have been two consultations with the wider network, as well as further engagement through the establishment of task and finish groups whose brief is to undertake more detailed planning. Informal research has been undertaken by attending events facilitated by local authorities and voluntary organisations across the country and feedback back to the Group. Experiences and best practice from local women involved in Black History Month celebration events, for example, have also been taken into account.

6. Risk Management

| Risk Description | Consequence of risk | Risk Controls | Probability of risk occurring taking account of controls (scale 1-6) 1 – almost impossible 6 – very high | Impact of risk, if it occurred taking account of actions (scale 1 – negligible; 4 – catastrophic) | Actions to mitigate risk |
|--|--|---|---|--|--|
| Risks relating to specific project activities e.g. events, training | Physical harm to participants, staff or volunteers | Risk assessment and appropriate management of each activity | 2 | 3 | Staff/volunteers to risk assess activity/venue before delivery |
| Activities not well attended or well managed | Public funds not well used | Consultation with participants and stakeholders Ongoing monitoring | 2 | 2 | Consultation in the development of events/activities/projects The Group to provide regular monitoring reports |
| The Group does not secure match funding | Some activities will be cancelled/ scaled down | The Group to apply for grant funding | 3 | 2 | The Group has already applied to other grant schemes and been successful IBC Community Engagement to provide feedback on applications |
| The Group does not achieve its aims e.g. to encourage more women to register to vote | Public funds not well used | Consultation with participants and stakeholders Ongoing monitoring | 3 | 2 | Consultation in the development of events/activities/projects The Group to provide regular monitoring reports |

7. Environmental Impact Assessment

7.1 There are no environmental impacts identified within this report.

8. Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 8.2 Funding this project would support the Group in their work to advance the equality of opportunity for women, by championing women's rights and remove barriers to women's participation in public life. The project similarly aims to encourage women from underrepresented groups to vote and participate, including those from minority ethnic backgrounds.

9. Financial Considerations

| Expenditure Description | Cost |
|---|------------------|
| <u>EqualiTeas</u> | |
| Venue hire | £650 |
| Staffing (for access to 2 nd floor) 2 people for 6 hours at £7.85 per hour | £94.20 |
| Refreshments for 300 people | £1,050 |
| <u>Pop up Exhibitions</u> | |
| Licensing, Mounting, Copying | £600 |
| Contribution to Display Boards | £347 |
| <u>Craft Events</u> | |
| Banner-making and 'The Women's Quilt' Crafts | £515.33 |
| Train fares (Nottingham to Ipswich) for 2 people to transport quilt | £38.39 |
| Overnight accommodation and refreshments for 2 people | £392.60 |
| <u>Suffragette Reconstruction and Polling Booth</u> | |
| Contribution to both activities | £1,000 |
| Total | £4,687.52 |

- 9.1 The overall cost of the project is estimated to be up to £25,000, should all of the activities go ahead, and if there is a clear route to ensure future sustainability.
- 9.2 The Group has already secured a grant of £10,000 from the National Lottery – Awards for All programme. The majority of which will enable the group to employ a project coordinator. The Group also intends to apply for a grant from the Women's Vote Centenary Grants scheme.
- 9.3 The Group has received in-kind contributions from the main eight Action Group members, plus the time and energy of the fifty volunteer members who have engaged. The University has offered use of the venue at a 50% discount and the East of England Co-op will offer funding towards refreshments for EqualiTeas (actual amount to be confirmed). The Pacitti Company has offered support and possible

resources to facilitate a half-day plenary within the SPILL programme and will house the event, and publicise it, via their own marketing.

- 9.4 Each Area Committee is asked to contribute towards the request of £4,687.52. The split is proportional to the number of wards in each Area. The total amount requested of the North East Area Committee budget is £878.91.

10. Legal Considerations

- 10.1 The Council has the power to make grants to community projects through the Area Committees. The Area Committees have delegated executive powers and devolved budgets.
- 10.2 Area Committees have the power to award grants in accordance with part 3, section 2 of the Council's Constitution i.e. the Area Committee terms of reference.
- 10.3 The Ipswich Women's Festival Group is a constituted group with a named committee. The organisation has provided its constitution document and details of a named bank account. As this is a one-off project, it is not deemed necessary for the Group to produce a business plan and/or strategy document, although they have drawn up a project plan. It thereby meets the requirements of the Area Committee funding guidelines.

11. Performance Monitoring

- 11.1 The success of the project will be measured by collecting quantitative data such as number of attendees and number of people registering to vote, as well as qualitative methods. Social media will be used to gauge involvement and gather experiences.
- 11.2 A Community Engagement Officer will monitor the progress and success of the organisations services and activities. Over the course of the project, the Group will report to the Area Committees on the progress of their projects in Ipswich, either by report or by presentation.

12. Conclusions

- 12.1 The Ipswich Women's Festival Group aim to deliver a number of unique and impactful activities to celebrate the struggle and sacrifices made by suffrage campaigners to win the right for women to vote and encourage more women to use their vote in the future. The network of local organisations will ensure the project has a strong legacy, which will further raise awareness of women's issues and enable women's participation in civic life.

13. Recommendations

13.1 That the North East Area Committee consider the options set out in Section 4 and determine the allocation of funding to the Ipswich Women's Festival Group.

Reason: To determine the merit of providing Area Committee funding to Ipswich Women's Festival Group towards the cost of the project to celebrate 100 years of the women's vote.