

10. DALLINGTON COMMUNITY PROJECT

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The purpose of this report is to present information from a review of the Dallington Community Cottage Trust, Community Centre and to seek Board approval to allocate 2004/05 Project funds, currently on hold, to the project.

BACKGROUND

At its 19 February 2004/05 Project funding allocation meeting the Board allocated \$9,200 to the Dallington Community Cottage Trust's Community Centre. This grant was made subject to a satisfactory review by staff of the project. Of this amount \$1,170 has been paid to the Trust as per the Board's instructions to cover two months rental until the review was completed.

Information for the review was collected from feedback from the Dallington Residents' Association via individual and a group questionnaire, minutes of meetings of the Trust, financial accounts and an overview of controls and systems in place supplied by the Trust, informal conversations with locals and visits to the community centre. (A copy of the minutes and financial information is available on request from the Community Development Adviser.)

RELEVANT POLICY AND OBJECTIVES

The Dallington Community Cottage Trust Community Centre contributes to:

- The outcomes and priorities of the Council's Social Wellbeing and Community policies, particularly those on lower incomes, older persons, people with disabilities, women and socially isolated.
- Council Strategic Objectives:
 - A1: Maximising opportunities for residents to participate in learning and leisure activities.
 - A2: Strengthening communities by funding and supporting community initiatives and community organisations.
 - A3: Contributing to safe and healthy lifestyles by supporting self-help initiatives.
 - A5: Ensuring that the needs and aspirations of children, youth, elderly and people with disabilities are taken into account in all Council activities.
 - 2.1 Work with local communities and community organisations to increase the capacity of communities.
 - 3.2 Build coalitions with and between community groups and other agencies.
 - 4.1 Ensure Council activities are based on community needs and capacities.
- Board Strategic Objectives:
 - A2: Strengthening communities by networking with community groups to establish initiatives identified, and providing seeding funds and ongoing management support.
Funding and supporting training for the management committees of community organisations and community centres/halls.
 - A3: Contributing to safe and healthy lifestyles by resourcing management committees and providing training for management committee members.

SUMMARY OF THE DALLINGTON PROJECT AND REVIEW

The broad concept for the community centre was as a community craft initiative and information/resource centre for Dallington locals run by volunteers. From this other social initiatives were expected to develop.

Originally from a joint project with Anglican Care, the new centre is managed entirely by the Dallington Community Cottage Trust Committee. Anglican Care is still involved in a limited capacity, leasing the premises on behalf of the Trust. An agreement is in place between the two regarding their relationship (a copy of this is available on request from the Community Development Adviser). The Trust is intending to take over this lease when it comes up for renewal in November 2004 and this will see Anglican Care stepping back from the project entirely.

In December 2003 the Dallington Community Cottage Trust began operating a community centre at premises at the shopping centre on the corner of McBratneys Road and Gayhurst Road. The centre was managed by a committee and staffed by over 30 volunteers of the local community. The current Dallington Community Cottage Trust Committee has six members including two from the previous community cottage project.

The current office holders are:

Chairperson - Anita Hindmarsh
Secretary - Jayne Cummins
Treasurer - Jim Newberry

The committee meets on a minimum monthly basis and financial information is reported back at this time. Its financial year runs from July to June. Currently the Council (via the Community Board) is the only funder of the Trust. The Trust operates two accounts - one for the craft activities and one for the Trust itself. Another volunteer at the centre oversees the financial operation of the craft initiative with the shop takings banked on a daily basis and kept separate from the Trust's finances. The accounts are currently being audited by a chartered accountant for the Trust's AGM, which is due to be held on 17 August 2004.

The centre is staffed on a rostered basis by up to 40 volunteers who have each created craft items on display or for sale in the centre. The roster is also coordinated by one of the volunteers. Hours of operation are Monday-Friday 10.30 am - 4.30 pm and Saturday 10.00 am - 1.00 pm.

In addition to the craft initiative the centre hosts craft demonstrations, and has a craft group, a walking group and a friendly club. They have future plans to offer the community internet access (having just received a computer from Molten Media) and a gardening club and their historical display is soon to be completed. The Residents' Association are meeting at the premises and have offered to provide a community notice board to the centre.

Feedback from individual members and collectively from the Residents' Association has all been positive to date, with all respondents pleased with the location, hours of operation, community awareness and use of the centre, with continued increasing use expected. The only negative issue or comment also reflects the success of the project, with the Trust and community saying that the premises are too small for the amount of activity requested and groups that would like to meet at or use the centre.

CONCLUSION

The vision behind the community centre was as a community craft initiative/information/resource centre for Dallington that could facilitate the development of other social initiatives and be run by volunteers. This is exactly how the project is progressing to date and in a reasonably short period of time. All of the conditions that the Trust had both internally and externally taken on have been met. There are regular minuted meetings and financial reports back to committee members and a triple check system in place for the craft finances. An independent auditor has also been retained. The management and financial systems the Trust have in place ensure that their project is accountable and open to the community and Council alike. The commitment, energy and effort the Trust and volunteers have put into the centre has been realised in the success of the project in achieving what it set out to do. This project is a good example of community and community groups working together. Community action and social capital likely to be achieved from the project includes; building trust, engaging the community, addressing isolation, supporting volunteers, relationship building in the community, community upskilling, partnerships with and within the community, promoting volunteerism, participation, strengthening communities and increasing self-esteem. With additional projects planned and a willingness to cater for needs as the community identifies them the community the centre looks set to become a valuable local focal point for the community.

Staff

Recommendation: That the Dallington Community Cottage Trust Community Centre project be granted the remaining 2004/05 Project funds of \$8,030 towards operational costs.

Chairperson's

Recommendations:

1. That the abovementioned recommendation be adopted.
2. That Dallington Community Cottage Trust members be thanked for their efforts on behalf of the Dallington community.