

Rent Support Assessment

Appendix 2

Name of Applicant:	Hesters Way Neighbourhood Project
Is the applicant a legally constituted, not-for-profit voluntary and community sector organisation?	Yes
Name /address of property	Neighbourhood Charity Shop 16-18 Hesters Way Road Hesters Way Cheltenham GL51 0DA
Current rent	Market rent is £6,000 Currently in receipt of 40% discount and therefore pays £3,600 per annum

Rent Support outcomes	submission	Proposed score against the sub-elements (up to a maximum of 20% per outcome)
Cheltenham's environmental quality and heritage is protected, maintained and enhanced. This could include - Promoting bio-diversity - Responding to climate change - Promoting sustainable living - Protecting and enhancing parks, gardens and open spaces - Protecting and enhancing the built environment	The area outside of the Neighbourhood Charity Shop is regularly swept and tidied up by the volunteer team. The shop is open 5 days a week, 9am to 3pm, and we are working on plans to extend hours and to make the shop front look more attractive. We play our part in helping reduce the amount of items that go to landfill by recycling clothes, bric-a-brac household goods, etc., all helping to respond to the climate change agenda and reducing our collective carbon footprint. We forward any items that we are unable to re-use to other charity shops and beneficiaries. These items are provided at low cost and sometimes at no cost to the disadvantaged of our community. We also sell to environmentally conscious residents and those simply looking for a bargain. We promote local activities such as litter picks and public art projects and the venue is used to consult local residents from time to time.	The panel noted that the activities of the shop do help reduce the amount of waste going to landfill through encouraging re-cycling and reuse of household items. There was little evidence of other environmental impacts. There is therefore some evidence that the proposed activities will have a positive impact on the following: Promoting sustainable living The recommended discount is 4%
Sustain and grow Cheltenham's economic and cultural vitality. This could include: - Helping people into employment - Helping businesses to get established - Supporting cultural activity - Providing advice and information - Supporting tourist activities	The Neighbourhood Charity Shop has a proven track record in helping people get into employment. This is done through our volunteering programme and through sign posting to training providers, employers and job clubs. The charity shop is run almost entirely by a team of typically six volunteers, 50% are retired folk and 50% are of working age. Of the working age volunteers at least two typically secure employment within a 6 to 12 month period.	The panel noted the applicant's assertion that the shop has helped people get into employment but there were no facts to measure this assertion by. The panel did note that the shop is run by 6 volunteers.

Rent Support outcomes	submission	Proposed score against the sub-elements (up to a maximum of 20% per outcome)
	We help new business starters by letting them advertise for free. A couple of current examples include a home cleaning service and a gardener. Significantly, profits from our charity shop go toward support local projects. For a number of years now it has been covering the overheads of our outreach and community hub project in Rowanfield called “The Living Room” – please see separate application. As an example of our neighbourliness, we recently helped the Co-Op with staff work placements over the course of 6weeks during a shop refit. We regularly advertise jobs, training, business seminars and cultural activities that take place across the town as well as local activities, and provide information and sign posting to specialist advisors.	There is therefore some evidence that the proposed activities will have a positive impact on the following: • Helping people into employment • Helping people into employment - 4 • Helping businesses to get established - 4 • Supporting cultural activity • Providing advice and information • Supporting tourist activities The recommended discount is 8%
People live in strong and safe communities. This could include • Enabling local residents to meet together and socialise • Engaging residents in positive social networks • Enabling local residents to contribute their time and efforts into community activity • Enabling local residents to feel safer in their communities • A place for young people to meet and feel safe	Although a charity shop it is also a meeting place for local residents who come for a chat, to catch up on the latest gossip and, on a more serious note, to keep an eye out for local people, especially the vulnerable and infirm. Our volunteer team are good listeners, are often a shoulder to lean on for some residents, and a shoulder to cry on from time to time. They help as best they can, sharing life experiences, and if they can't help they will track down someone who can help through local networks and the larger HWNP team. They will sometimes make phone calls for people, talking to the council or whoever on their behalf or standing by their side whilst they make the call. As mentioned previously the charity shop is run almost entirely by volunteers who invariably live locally, giving them a sense of belonging, identity and self-worth. As volunteers and customer build up networks of friends and contacts they feel safer. This has been particularly helpful for a number of eastern European residents and has especially helped one single mother and family of 5 who moved into the area a few years ago under police protection. She volunteered at the shop and after a while extended her horizons to inject a lot of community building enterprise at the Community Life café in Rowanfield (now known at the Living Room) and went on to full time work with the Co-Op One of the big foci of The Neighbourhood Shop is aimed at young, sometimes single mothers or fathers or other carers. The shop endeavours to stock a large range of baby clothes, cots, buggies, bedding and a good stock of children's clothes including school uniforms, for those less well off or with	The panel noted that the application was stronger in relation to its community benefits. Though again the application was let down by the lack of information about how many residents used and benefited from the building. There is therefore some evidence that the proposed activities will have a positive impact on the following: • Enabling local residents to meet together and socialise • Engaging residents in positive social networks • Enabling local residents to contribute their time and efforts into community activity • Enabling local residents to feel safer in their communities The recommended discount is 16%

Rent Support outcomes	submission	Proposed score against the sub-elements (up to a maximum of 20% per outcome)
	large families to cater for. Keeping an eye on the market it aims to make clothes cheaper than charity shops in town. On the fun side we have provided many a fancy dress costume and trash fashion clothing for seasonal parties for local families and their friends.	
We will work to strengthen the emotional and physical wellbeing of all Cheltenham residents This could include: • Enabling local people to be active • Helping local people make healthy lifestyle choices • Reducing the harm caused by alcohol • Improving mental health • Improving health & wellbeing into older age	As stated previously, our charity shop is almost entirely run by volunteers who are certainly kept active with all that has to be done to keep things running. We also help local people be active through promotion of events and we have links with numerous community groups who use the shop for supplies to run their own weekly sessions and attend events. Volunteers regularly tell us that volunteering at the shop means a lot to them; helping them in a myriad of ways. Examples includes: • “Keeps me sane and connected to people so I’m not all alone at home by myself” – a retired retailer and widow. • “Has given me a chance to start over again” – a middle aged mother with something of a bad reputation and spent criminal record. • “I’ve suffered depression for years. The shop gives me the chance to do something for others which helps a lot, makes me feel useful ” – retired book keeper • “Has helped me build up my confidence and I now have part time work” – a mother returning to work. We are working with a local resident who started volunteering with us recently two times a week. She was the victim of a serious personal crime against her and suffers extreme anxiety and seldom comes out of the house. We built up a good relationship with her partner (a customer) over the last 12 months since the incident to the point where he enquired about possible volunteering for her as he could see the charity shop would be a safe and friendly place to help move forward with her life. All sorts of discussions take place between volunteers and customers including diets, problems with kids, the school, how to access benefits, and all other manner of life experiences including fun times and simply folk helping one another We help refugees and sign post to things like the English Speaking Club run by CBH and all the wellbeing activities run at the Hesters Way and Springbank Centres, the Oasis Ability Hub, GMAS’s café and youth working in Springbank, the Living Room and activities at the St.Marks and Hesters Way Community Centre.	The panel noted that the application set out a number of perceived health benefits, particularly in relation to residents being active through volunteering and how this benefits people with mental health issues. The addition of direct quotes helped paint a picture of the value of the shop. Again the application was let down by the lack of information about how many residents used and benefited from the building. There is therefore some evidence that the proposed activities will have a positive impact on the following: • Enabling local people to be active • Improving mental health The recommended discount is 8%

Rent Support outcomes	submission	Proposed score against the sub-elements (up to a maximum of 20% per outcome)
	At the end of the day we run a community focused charity shop that does more than simply recycle clothes and household goods, we are part of the fabric of our local neighbourhood which serves people and families of all ages and backgrounds. Our Neighbourhood Charity Shop is seen by many as a community hub and a space where people can go for a friendly chat even if they are not buying anything. Hesters Way as an area has long suffered from a collective feeling among those in social housing here that they are not stakeholders. The Neighbourhood Shop and the other Neighbourhood Project's amenities help to give people a sense of ownership of their community.	
Summary and recommended rent support grant		The combined recommended discount is 36%

Financial considerations	Panel assessment
Will the grant award support the financial viability of the operation of the building?	The panel noted that the Shop does generate a surplus but were concerned to see that this had reduced from £10.6k in 15/16 to a project surplus of £2.9k in 17/18. This does raise the question over the long term viability of the shop. If Cabinet agree to apply a 36% rent support grant, the applicant will pay £3,840 pa. This represents an increase of £240 on the rent being paid currently. If Cabinet agree to an additional 10% rent support grant, the applicant will pay £3,240 pa, a decrease of £360 on the rent being paid currently
Has the organisation got reasonable longer-term plans to sustain activities being delivered from the building beyond the term of the grant?	The panel were concerned that there are no robust plans to make activities taking place in the building more financially sustainable.

Cabinet Recommendation

A rent support grant of 36% of current market rent totalling £2,160 per annum.