

Policy & Resources Committee Meeting – 5<sup>th</sup> October 2022

**Agenda Item 10.3**

**Community Infrastructure Levy**

Community Garden Project

A request for funds has been received from the garden group at Lower Earley Salvation Army, to assist them with their plans to develop a sensory garden for the community. The application is for £2,000. Their initial approach was to WBC where the CIL officer indicated that this would be a suitable project for CIL funding and directed them to Earley Town Council.

A grant application form has been completed in order that the relevant information is provided, this will be circulated separately to members of the committee. Further details from the applicant about the project are as follows:

*Since 2020 we have been restoring the grounds around the Lower Earley Salvation Army. We are a very small team and have to date self-funded the work with some small support from Wickes with some supplies and M&S with a few plants. We are in our third year of development and now require some help with funding.*

*Our vision was that our garden would be open to the community as somewhere to sit and take time to reflect and find rest, which was so important during COVID and remains so today.*

*Since 2020 our building has been opened-up to support the COVID vaccination programme and still in 2022 we are offering our building for booster vaccinations and flu vaccinations. We have developed a close relationship with Brookside Surgery and support their 'social prescribing' initiative through our open garden club. We also offer our building on a Sunday afternoon for the Hong Kong families to meet. We also host the Contact Centre twice a month on a Saturday afternoon and the slimming club on Saturday mornings. So our building is getting widely used outside of our own church activities.*

*Our plans are to develop a sensory garden close to the coffee hub so that everyone can enjoy the sight, sound and vision of the garden. However, this does require hard landscaping and although we will approach local DIY stores for supplies we do need to fund the work by the professional. We are looking for a grant of around £2,000 to fulfil our plans. We also have a large strip of wasteland which we are developing to make it more attractive for all the residents who walk down the pathways. We have made an oasis area, and we hope to continue to develop our wild flower garden and our planting will include plants that survive in hot climates.*

*Over the last two years we have had lots of wonderful comments and a great deal of encouragement from local people.*

Jo Friend

Town Clerk