



St James's

2008-10 Ward Budget Monitoring Report

Councillors: Louise Hyams, Tim Mitchell, Cllr Alexander Nicoll

Summary

Ward Members identified 7 priorities to allocate their ward budget from April 2008-March 2010.

A total of 9 of projects were funded over the two years in the St James's ward. The key outputs/achievements of each project funded have been highlighted under the priority headings in this document.

Ward Members were given £200,000 ward budget funding to allocate over the two year pilot programme. £157,739 of this budget was allocated, with the remaining budget being returned to the council's reserves.

Key Highlights of Projects Funded

Priority: Supporting Older People

Subsidised Exercise Classes for Older People

Provider: Jubilee Hall Clubs

Total ward budget funding: £8,400

- This funding allowed people over the age of 50 to participate in heavily subsidised exercise classes at a cost of £1 per session.
- Over the course of the year, a total of 219 sessions of physical activity/dance were put on (the target was 240) with 1,365 attendances. The sessions were ballroom dancing, line dancing, salsa, Latin and Bollywood dance. 96% of participants were over the age of 50. 68% of users lived in St James Ward and majority of the remainder were resident in other parts of Westminster.
- Feedback from participants has been very positive. 89% said that they were more active than before and 92% had noticed improvements to their general health or fitness.
- Comments included: "I find it is very satisfying and it's very active, that's why I keep coming back"; "A very fun morning incorporating movement, exercise and remembering the steps - it has been most enjoyable."



Befriending Service for Older People

Provider: The Abbey Centre

Total ward budget funding: £5,454

- This funding allowed the project to recruit volunteers to befriend isolated older people via a structured programme of contact.
- A total of 16 older people received befriending from trained volunteers (the target was 15). However, of these 16 only 9 were from the St James's ward. This has been fed back to the provider.
- That notwithstanding, the feedback has been good and comment include "it's nice to know someone cares" and "she's such a joy, intelligent and articulate, a credit to young people."

Older People's Healthy Living Programme

Provider: Chinese Community Centre

Total ward budget funding: £650

- This project had intended to widen the centre's existing Community Healthy Living Programme to engage with all local residents of all ethnicities through a lunch club, Tai Chi and Chi Gong classes, health advice and an outing.
- The project did not ultimately go ahead due to lack of interest. However, the ward budget funded management and administrative costs for designing and printing a leaflet and poster for the project and the costs of meeting various organisations to promote the project.

Priority: Improving the Local Environment through the Reduction of Noise

Proactive Noise Officer

Provider: Premises Management

Total ward budget funding: £42,000 (3 month funding of £14,000 plus two extensions)

- The ward budget funded one proactive Noise Officer to work for 36 hours per week, for 9 months, to follow up noise complaints in the ward on a priority basis.
- Monitoring reports have been received on a monthly basis but as an indication of the work undertaken, during the February/March period there were 116 complaints made to the Reactive Noise Team regarding premises and sites within the St James's Ward, resulting in 68 site visits. A third of complaints related to commercial premises, a fifth related to residential premises and a further fifth were street based complaints. In two cases statutory notices were served.
- Feedback from residents has been constructive: "Things continue to be ever quieter here, it's great. Nights now are much quieter"; "The overall level of noisy out-of-hours deliveries is generally much reduced".

Priority: Addressing Poor Air Quality through Greening

Greening Projects and Christchurch Gardens and Drury Lane

Provider: Parks

Total ward budget funding: £15,400

- This project was in two parts, providing greening works in Christchurch Gardens, from the Caxton Street to Victoria Street area, and in Drury Lane Gardens.
- In Christchurch Gardens, the existing shrub material was removed to prepare a planting bed for a new planting scheme. In the opinion of the head of service, it is one of the best examples of sustainable planting he has seen!
- In Drury Lane Gardens, the play equipment and stone paving and seating were jet washed, shrubs were removed and replaced and the basket ball hoops at each end of the ball court were replaced.

Priority: Improving the Public Realm in the Ward

Production of Revised Design Report for St James's Square

Provider: St James's Conservation Trust

Total ward budget funding: £9,480

- Ward budget funding is being used to produce an updated illustrated design report to demonstrate the scope of proposals for St James's Square and facilitate future stakeholder consultation and approvals process for the overall delivery of the improvements programme for the Square.
- The St James's Conservation Trust is currently working to produce the promotional booklet and has received the outline version. A review of this draft is taking place in and once the booklet is completed copies will be obtained.

Priority: Supporting Young People in the Ward to be Healthy

Theatre Arts for Young Girls

Provider: The Abbey Centre

Total ward budget funding: £2,595

- The ward budget part-funded (approximately one quarter) this project which delivered weekly dance, drama and singing lessons for girls aged 8 to 16. In addition, exercise taster sessions, healthy eating sessions and first aid workshops were held. Public performances were held in the summer and at Christmas.
- The partner funding was for a wider geographical area than St James's ward; in total, 364 young people participated and 50% were St James's residents.
- Comment from participants included "it was great being part of a big performance with other people", "the costumes were great, it's the first time I've worn a sari" and "I didn't like bananas but they taste different in a smoothie, so that's what I'll do".

Priority: Support for Local Community Organisations

Part-Funding of Minibus

Provider: St Andrew's Club

Total ward budget funding: £6,000

- This project part-funded a minibus St Andrew's, for use by both the Club and also free of charge by local organisations who do not have their own minibus.
- By considering usage figures provided by the club, it was demonstrated that £6,000 funding would be equivalent to approximately £50 hire-out cost per use, inexpensive at current transport costs and therefore of benefit to local community organisations.
- Monitoring information on use of the minibus will be supplied over the coming months.

Priority: Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour

Match Funding for City Guardians to Patrol in Covent Garden

Provider: Premises Management

Total ward budget funding: £67,760

- The ward budget match funded two City Guardians to patrol as part of a team of 4 City Guardians in Covent Garden and the surrounding area for a period of 10 months.
- Monthly monitoring reports have been received and to give a flavour of the issues tackled, in January 2010 following increased smoking related litter being observed, 557 visitors were advised against dropping cigarette litter, many of whom offered to pick up the litter and appreciated being advised against littering.
- In September 2009 over 30 instances of inappropriate entertainment were interrupted on James Street and the performers moved on. Many were in breach of existing street entertainment code of conduct such as juggling and palm reading in exchange of money.
- In July 2009 an off licence audit of the Covent Guardian area was completed to establish information about what premises sell super strength cider/beers. This led to partnership work with the Covent Garden Safer neighbourhood team to tackle street drinking in the area.

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