

Champion for Digital Inclusion

Report on Expenditure from 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2016

"To assist the Leader and appropriate Cabinet Members to oversee the Delivery of the Digital Inclusion Delivery Plan, to Chair an internal Digital Inclusion Delivery Group and to act as an Ambassador for Digital Inclusion across a diverse range of partners and stakeholders including community and voluntary groups right the way through to major UK private sector organisations"

As Lancashire County Council's Digital Inclusion Champion, I have this year awarded all of the £10,000* allocated as grant funding in support of organisations working on digital inclusion activities. Activities Supported from my 2015/16 Budget that address digital inclusion across Lancashire are:

Time 4 Craft – IT Equipment and Training £1,500

Time 4 Craft is a group that was originally set up and facilitated by Help Direct Preston and South Ribble before it became an autonomous, constituted group in 2014. The group was founded in 2013 and they regularly have in excess of 25 members attending on a weekly basis at Penwortham Community Centre. They are constantly looking to expand numbers, existing members come from all age groups and there is a strong cultural mix of people. The group is affiliated to the Preston and South Ribble Timebank and many of their members accumulate time credits just by attending the group supporting others.

They try to identify a diverse range of craft and lifestyle opportunities for their members to participate in. They have a significant amount of requests from members who wish to learn about computers as some people remain excluded from the digital revolution of recent years. They are interested in setting up a computer training facility primarily for their members to aid them in the development of their craft skills. They would encourage those with existing or newly developed computer skills to share them with the wider community in the local area. They see this as a valuable lifestyle opportunity for people as it will help develop social cohesion and personal network development.

Since they are a community craft group they can see the benefits of introducing digital technology to aid and enhance the different craft activities they participate in. The funding of £1,500 helped to purchase three laptop computers, a colour printer and refill cartridges, access to broadband and a range of craft software including Craft Artist 2. They also intended to buy in some initial training sessions and then they will have the knowledge to share with other members in the group and wider community.

Ightenhill Parish Council – Development of a Parish Website £250

Ightenhill Parish Council did not have any form of website and could only communicate with residents via paper posters on noticeboards. A simple google

Appendix C

search reveals no information on the parish council. The funding of £250 enabled them to set up a website, being online will enable residents to view agendas for upcoming meetings and minutes from past meetings, encouraging more to attend meetings. It will save money for the parish and help the environment by placing agendas and reports online, so a reduced amount of paper copies will need printing for meetings as those with i-pads or tablets will be able to download the agenda on their portable device.

Special community events can also be placed online along with updates on when crime is taking place throughout the area if volunteers are needed for projects.

Most other parish councils in Lancashire have a website and new government legislation coming into force will make it a requirement that parish council information is available online in the next couple of years.

Burscough Parish Council to hold the 'Computer Skills Drop ins' Taster Sessions - £750

The funding requested of £750 provided 'Computer Skills Drop In' taster sessions to be held in Burscough Methodist Church over 6 weeks. The sessions also offered help to those who have basics but are in the need of help with specific tasks. They have been offered the use of 10 lap-tops owned by the U3A in Burscough and the Methodist Church is Wi-Fied.

Communities in Action North West CIC – Marketing/Training Sessions - £3,000

The funding of £3,000 was spent on marketing and training sessions and provided support to the Go On Lancashire Project aimed to engage with the most difficult to reach in the community. They provided training sessions with these groups and in doing so supported them in their move towards the job market. They aimed to provide the furthest from the job market with digital literacy skills to support them into employment, further education or training.

Big Light On CIC – Portable Computer Suite £1,605

Big Light On CIC purchased one portable suite for them to access remote areas of East Lancashire. They supported people who do not have regular access to the internet to get online. They deliver in some of the more rural East Lancashire area where the transport network is poor and people are more at risk of isolation and digital inclusion. They travel to places such as churches, sheltered accommodation and day centres where they can set up their laptops and portable internet. Covering a range of areas including helping learn how to use the equipment, supporting people in accessing public services online, applying for choice based letting, keeping in touch with friends, getting online at home, accessing online medical appointments, care plans or medical records.

The service is friendly and can offer one-to-one help is open to those who are absolute beginners or of any age. They have identified a continued lack of access, particularly from areas such as Whitworth and Bacup in Rossendale, with learners travelling to their centre just to get help.

The funding help towards the cost of the laptops and mobile internet device. The organisation will fund the additional items such as transport bags, mice, volunteer expenses, insurance and maintenance etc.

***County Councillor Sean Serridge
Champion for Digital Inclusion***

Appendix C
Schedule of Expenditure for 2015/16

County Councillor Sean Serridge - Champion for Digital Inclusion	
Applicant	Amount of Grant
Time 4 Craft Penwortham Community Centre (South Ribble) – IT Equipment and Training	£1,500
Ightenhill Parish Council (Burnley) – Development of a Parish Website	£250
Burscough Parish Council West Lancashire) - 'Computer Skills Drop in' Taster Sessions	£750
Communities In Action North West (West Lancashire) – Marketing/Training Sessions	£3,000
Big Light On CIC (Hyndburn) – Portable Computer Suite	£1,605
Community Gateway Association (Preston) - Outreach IT sessions.	£1,500
Westview Community Association (Fleetwood) - Five Samsung tablets for the IT Hub.	£1,500
TOTAL SPENT	£10,105*

* the additional £105 awarded in excess of the 2015/16 budget of £10,000 was funded from a brought forward balance in the Local Member & Gateway Grant reserve.