

For immediate release

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**Union Square launches £20,000 giveaway to local charities
- 2011 Community bursary scheme follows previous charity success -**

Union Square has launched a massive £20,000 giveaway through its community bursary scheme to help support small community groups and charities in Aberdeen City and Shire.

The scheme follows the previous success of the first community bursary which benefited 13 local groups.

Local charities and not-for-profit organisations are invited to apply for grants of up to £2,000 with the aim of supporting vital community work, across all age groups and backgrounds.

Beneficiaries from the first community bursary included Lairhillock Primary School who used the money to build their dream greenhouse, Aberdeen's Hip Hop School who were able to run a summer dance school and Friends of the Reading Bus who held poetry classes with local youngsters.

In addition to funding from Union Square, retailers throughout the centre will also be donating their time to support successful applicants with their cause or projects. Retailers who have to date pledged their time include Cineworld, Howards Storage World, Jack and Jones and Vero Moda, Hobbycraft and handmade burger Co.

Penny Godfrey, marketing manager, Union Square said: "It is exciting for us to be launching the second community bursary scheme for the Aberdeen City and Shire community.

"The first community bursary was a huge success and it was fantastic for us to watch the groups make their dream projects a reality from new bike trailers and allotments, to new school books and Tai Chi lessons.

"We want to encourage as many people as possible to apply for the funding. Anyone who works for a project that is of value to their local community can get in touch to tell us why it is so worthwhile.

"This year, applicants can take advantage of the top tips on our website to learn what makes a strong application and read about previous charities which have benefited from the community bursary scheme."

MC Ajet, director of Aberdeen's Hip Hop School Scotland and a beneficiary of the first community bursary scheme said: "The community bursary helped us achieve our dream of taking hip hop out to a wider audience. Since the bursary, we've seen a number of talented dancers, song-writers and singers join us and we've been lucky enough to perform as a group at the AECC."

Aberdeen City Council Enterprise Planning and Infrastructure convener Councillor Kate Dean said: "It's extremely encouraging to see Union Square continuing to support the local community in such a big way. Public finances are extremely tight in the current economic climate so it is very welcome to see the private sector stepping forward to make a valuable contribution. I would urge local groups to make a bid for a share of the bursary because an award of up to £2,000 could make all the difference to a community project."

The funding is for projects that fit within the themes of art and culture, education and skills, health and wellbeing or sustainability and the environment. The projects must be of value to and generate tangible benefits for, their local community.

Once applications have been received, a dedicated charity panel will select the projects that will benefit from the scheme. The panel includes Penny Godfrey, marketing manager and

Ryan Manson, general manager – Union Square, Tom Moore, City Centre Manager and Michelle Dawson, community manager, Hammerson.

Applications for the community bursary will close on Friday 25th March. For more information please visit: www.unionsquareaberdeen.com/communitybursary

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Notes to Editors:

Union Square is Aberdeen's newest retail and leisure quarter. Developed by Hammerson, the centre includes over 40 retailers across the main mall and shopping park (including Apple, Zara, Cult and world first, Gio-Goi), 19 restaurants and eateries (including new to the city Wagamama and new to Scotland, Spur Steak and Grill and Giraffe), a 203 bed Jurys Inn hotel and 10 screen multiplex Cineworld cinema, Aberdeen's largest cinema.

The centre is integrated with the city's bus and rail station, so is easily reached from all major routes. There are also 1,700 car parking spaces available.
www.unionsquareaberdeen.com.

Charity bursary scheme:

To qualify, you must be based in Aberdeen City and Shire and be a community based charity or not-for-profit organisation. Groups such as sports teams, nurseries and voluntary support groups are eligible. The project also must fit within one of three themes: Art and Culture, Education and Skills, Health and Wellbeing.

Applications for the community bursary will close on Friday 25th March. For more information on Union Square's community bursary, how to make the most of your application, or to read about the beneficiaries of the previous community bursary scheme, please visit:
www.unionsquareaberdeen.com/communitybursary

The community bursary was introduced – rather than a donation to one charity – as it allows Union Square the chance to help a number of charitable organisations which support a variety of causes within Aberdeen City and Shire.