

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Mid Sussex District Council
Cabinet Grants Panel held on Tuesday 18 April 2017
from 4.30 p.m. to 5.21 p.m.**

Present: Councillors: Jonathan Ash-Edwards (Chairman)
Norman Webster (Vice-Chairman)

Gary Marsh

1. SUBSTITUTES

None.

2. APOLOGIES

None.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

None.

4. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Panel held on 22 March 2017 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

5. URGENT BUSINESS

The Chairman agreed to take one item as urgent business, concerning Lewes District Council Section 106 funds secured from a development on the border with Mid Sussex District Council. The Council's Solicitor introduced the report, which is seeking the Panel's approval to release capital funds in the total amount of £280,000 to improve the footpath across Railway Land North and Bedelands Farm Local Nature Reserve and to refurbish the play area at Worlds End Recreation Ground. The Panel welcomed the recommendation and were happy to approve.

RESOLVED

That:-

- 1) Capital funds of £280,000 be released, supplied by Lewes District Council for the installation of all-weather paths at Railway Land North and Bedelands Farm LNR and to refurbish the play provision in the recreation ground at Worlds End Recreation Ground.

6. REPRESENTATIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

None.

7. CORPORATE GRANT SCHEMES

The Community Leisure Officer introduced the report, highlighting that there is one time critical application for consideration, along with two other matters, a Silver Sunday fund and a grant payment to Cuckfield Cricket Club.

The grant recommended for consideration and approval by the Panel is set out below:

Facility Grants

Organisation	Purpose for which award is sought	Award Requested	Award Suggested
Lindfield Cricket Club	Acoustic quilts for cricket nets	2,860	2,860
Total		£2,860	£2,860

The Panel noted and agreed the proposal put forward by the Community Leisure Officer to set aside £7,500 from the Community and Economic Grant fund to provide a ring-fenced fund for groups to apply for small one-off grants of up to £250 to run Silver Sunday events. It was noted that the event run last year in Haywards Heath was very successful and the Panel was very supportive of the proposal to broaden the initiative across Mid Sussex. The Panel requested that the Parish Councils were informed in order to pass the information on to interested parties.

With regard to the grant payment to Cuckfield Cricket Club, the Community Leisure Officer highlighted that the Club were awarded a £30,000 grant in 2013, and had drawn down £20,767 before failing to draw down the remaining £9,233 following the end of the defects liability period in 2015. As a result the Panel had agreed at a previous meeting that the remaining funds were no longer required and could be returned to the 'pot' to be available for other projects. Subsequently the Cricket Club have contacted the Council to claim the remaining instalment. In response to queries from Panel Members, it was confirmed that the total project cost was £140,000 of which the Council awarded a contribution towards this. The remaining funds are to be used for the changing rooms but the Panel requested that further information be provided on what has happened with the project since 2015, and were concerned that the toilet facilities are not being made available to the wider community. A decision to award the remaining funds was deferred until a future meeting when this new information can be considered.

The Panel considered the new application from Lindfield Cricket Club for the provision of acoustic quilts. This has been presented as a time critical application due to the start of the cricket season. The Environmental Health Officer is in agreement that the quilts are a suitable remedy to dull the sound, but there was no evidence presented as examples of this in place elsewhere in the District to compare. They are a temporary structure, but conditions are attached to the grant as they may still require planning permission. There is also a condition to ensure that the Club completes a lease agreement which includes the site of the practice nets. However, the Panel felt that this was not an appropriate condition as there are a number of issues to be resolved with the lease, making timescales for completion unrealistic. It was agreed that as the quilts are removable and can be hung from May to August, it was a good time to put them up now and test their effectiveness; therefore the grant was awarded subject to the amendment of the conditions removing the mention of lease completion.

RESOLVED

That:-

- 1) a Facility Grant of £2,860 be awarded to Lindfield Cricket Club (100% of the total project cost) toward the cost of acoustic quilts at Lindfield Common which is made up of – £2,860 (P35/662 Land north of Newton Road) Formal Sport contributions.

This grant offer is made subject to the following special conditions:

- the project must be completed within 12 months of project funding being obtained
 - planning approval to be obtained, if necessary.
- 2) a small grants scheme fund of £7,500 be set up to support Silver Sunday Events
 - 3) the application to release the remaining grant payment to Cuckfield Cricket Club be deferred until further information has been considered at a future meeting.

8. MICROBUSINESS GRANT SCHEME

The Programme Manager for the Burgess Hill Growth Area introduced the report which presented ten Microbusiness Grants. It was noted that an application has now been received from East Grinstead, following targeted promotion of the funding available. It was also highlighted that due to the rate of commitment of funding, the available funds will shortly be fully committed. A proposal for options to continue the grant scheme will be presented to the Panel at the next meeting.

All applications have been assessed against the criteria of delivering wider outreach, assisting with the delivery of new business lines, enabling more employees to be taken on, and delivery of community benefit. Each business also has to pass the due diligence checks carried out by the Business Liaison Officer.

The Microbusiness grants which are recommended for consideration and approval by the Panel are set out below:-

Microbusiness Grants

Organisation	Purpose for which award is sought	Award Requested	Award Suggested
Premier Marketing	Apprentice	£1,500	£1,500
Bright Light Film	Purchase of laptop and software	£275	£275
MIJC Ltd	Apprentice	£1,500	£1,500
ASL Carpentry & Construction	Apprentice and clothing/website	£2,100	£2,100
Ozlana Australia Ltd	Trade mission to South Korea	£2,000	£2,000
N Smith Home Transformation	Apprentice	£1,500	£1,500
ER Longley Hydroworks *	Website redesign and apprentice	£3,500	£3,500
Tiny Land	Website design and CE certification	£2,000	£2,000
Get Marketing Ltd	Laptop	£950	£950
Worth Glamping Ltd	Website upgrade and software	£2,000	£2,000
Total		£17,325	£17,325

* The Programme Manager highlighted that the application from ER Longley Hydroworks is being deferred to a future meeting as no due diligence checks have been able to be carried out at this stage.

During consideration of all the grants presented, the Panel raised a number of points which the Programme Manager clarified.

Regarding the first application from Premier Marketing, whilst the company met the criteria for a Microbusiness Grant at the time of publishing, the due diligence checks have highlighted a number of anomalies that question their suitability for a grant. The application is to assist with the hiring of an apprentice, however the company already employs one apprentice and asked if the funds could be used retrospectively for that position. As that is not possible, it was asked if the new apprentice could be the niece of the owner which, to the Business Liaison Officer did not sound like a formal arrangement. Also, the building in which the company is based also houses two other companies, all owned by the same family, which calls into question the size of Premier Marketing as a Microbusiness. It was confirmed that the other companies are separate legal entities but are owned by the same holding company and the feeling of the Business Liaison Officer is that some employees do work across all three. In light of concerns, the Panel asked for further due diligence to be carried out to confirm the company structure, how the payroll is administered, and to get further assurances that a new formal apprentice will be hired with the funds. Until that information is provided, the Panel agreed to defer a decision on the application.

The Panel were happy to support the application by Bright Light Film, noting that it met the criteria for a microbusiness and had made efforts to source a reasonably priced laptop, by getting a reconditioned model. They were also happy to support the application from MIJC Ltd, noting the formal arrangements in place for the hiring of an apprentice, with a well thought out programme for training and qualification. Similarly, they welcomed the application from ASL Carpentry, a reputable young company seeking to hire an apprentice, purchase clothing and upgrade their website. The Programme Manager had confirmed with the owner that the grant was sufficient to cover all costs, despite seeming a low amount for the work entailed, and the Panel were happy to agree.

The application from Ozlana Australia Ltd raised a number of queries from the Panel, resulting in the decision to defer the application until further information could be provided. The company consists of one person based in Haywards Heath as a wholesale retailer of Ugg Boots from Australia, seeking a grant to fund a trade mission in South Korea to open up a new market. They also plan to open a sales office and hire more staff if successful. Concern was raised over why additional staff would be required; if this was in effect a paper transaction between Australia and South Korea, with no product entering the UK. In response, the Programme Manager clarified that the South Korea mission would hopefully generate funds to enable a separate branch of the business to open in the UK. The Panel were concerned as to the need for a 'middle-man' based in the UK as the business appeared to be between two separate countries, and questioned how the grant would give economic benefit to a Mid Sussex business. They also sought clarification on what the current turnover of the business is now, and why the owner is only a 10% shareholder. The Programme Manager agreed to present further information to a future meeting.

Applications from N Smith Home Transformations, Tiny Land and Get Marketing Ltd were welcomed by the Panel, noting that the hiring of an apprentice, development of new websites and laptop purchases would assist them in increasing their profiles, offering a more professional and flexible service to clients.

The application from Worth Glamping Ltd was also agreed by the Panel. The Programme Manager confirmed that the grant amount sought was £2,000 as opposed to £950 mentioned in the Appendix and the exact location of the business was confirmed as Worth Lodge Cottage, High Street, Balcombe and therefore with the Mid Sussex District.

RESOLVED

That:-

- 1) That the application from Premier Marketing be deferred to a future meeting.
- 2) That a Micro Business grant of £275 is awarded to Bright Light Film to assist with the purchase of a laptop and software.
- 3) That a Micro Business grant of £1500 is awarded to MIJC Ltd to support the recruitment of an apprentice.
- 4) That a Micro Business grant of £2100 is awarded to ASL Carpentry & Construction Ltd to support the recruitment of an apprentice and the purchase of company-branded clothing along with an improved website.
- 5) That the application from Ozlana Australia Ltd be deferred to a future meeting.
- 6) That a Micro Business grant of £1500 is awarded to N Smith Home Transformations to support the recruitment of an apprentice.
- 7) That the application from ER Longley Hydroworks be deferred to a future meeting.
- 8) That a Micro Business grant of £2000 is awarded to Tiny Land to support the creation of a website and the provision of relevant advice on CE certification.
- 9) That a Micro Business grant of £950 is awarded to Get Marketing Ltd for the purchase of a new laptop.
- 10) That a Micro Business grant of £2000 is awarded to Worth Glamping for the creation of a new website with an online booking portal.

Chairman.