

## **CORPORATE GRANT SCHEMES**

### **(Community Grants)**

**REPORT OF:** HEAD OF COMMS, PR, & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

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**Wards Affected:** All

**Key Decision:** No

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### **Purpose of report**

1. The report presents a review of the grants awarded in the financial years 2019/20 and 2020/21 and an analysis of how the funds were spent. The report covers the Community Grants and the COVID-19 grants.

### **Recommendations**

2. Members of the panel are requested to:
  - **Note the review of the Community Grants and Covid-19 Recovery Grants awarded in the 2 years between April 2019 – March 2021 and the feedback from awarded applicants.**
3. Detailed summaries of the grants are provided in the attached Appendices. The following is an overview of the two grant schemes.

### **Community Grants awarded in April 2019-March 2021** *(Appendix 1)*

#### **Background**

4. During the 2020/21 grants round, Covid and the subsequent lockdowns severely restricted the voluntary and community sector's ability to plan for activities and as a result bids to the community grants scheme fell significantly. The subsequent Covid grants enabled groups to apply for funding to mitigate against some of the negative impacts of Covid.
5. The end of grant reporting for 2019/20 was not presented to last years Grants Panel due to Covid priorities and hence both years 2019/20 and 2020/21 are presented jointly in this report.
6. Applications for all grants and the Release of S106 contributions are assessed against a standard checklist and considered by a "Grants Assessment Group" to ensure a consistent approach to the awarding funds.
7. Applications are assessed against four key criteria – Council priorities, evidence of need, financial impact and benefits.

8. All organisations awarded have met the basic current criteria and specific grant criteria, i.e. they are fully constituted voluntary and not for profit organisations and have provided the relevant information to support their application.

### **Summary of key points**

- In total 54 Community Grants were awarded funds with funding totalling £101,557 in the period Apr 2019- Mar 2021.
- Groups provided match-funding in excess of £580,000, equating to over five times the investment value of the grants awarded.
- On average, the scheme funded just under 50% of total project costs.
- More than 6,000 residents (of which were recorded) benefited from the funded projects.
- The fund supported young people, disability groups, older people, sports, arts, befriending and counselling, and community events (including Silver Sunday).
- 39% of the grants were awarded to the south of the district, 24% to the north and 22% to the central part of the district. 8 applications offered services Mid Sussex wide.
- 14 Silver Sunday projects were funded.
- All three Town Councils received money for local events
- Most grants were spent on equipment, venue hire and core costs.

### **Ways in which Community Grants have benefited residents**

9. St John's Felbridge - A holiday activity project for teenagers where they were supported?) to repaint a Toyota Celica for 1-2 weeks during the summer holidays. They purchased a Toyota Celica, the paints, and the equipment necessary to run the project and in August 2019 eight teenagers from local secondary schools participated in the project for a week. The project promoted healthy lifestyles by providing creative, outdoor, and practical activities for teenagers. They learned new skills and engaged with their peers productively. It facilitated community and social inclusion for different teenagers who otherwise may not have spent time together or engaging in social activities outside of school.
10. Jubilee Hub East Grinstead – support for a drop-in social group for people aged 18 and over who are isolated and wanting to meet other people. Many of the members have long term mental health and addiction issues, learning disabilities or chronic physical conditions. The Hub has become a community of its own, with people increasingly supporting each other by building friendships and helping outside of the hub.
11. Rotary Club of the Sussex Vale – Support to increase the number of dementia friendly café sessions. These were very popular, and the funding enabled more people to meet , socialise and take a break from caring duties. The cafés also provided access to information and support services.
12. Albourne, Sayers Common & Twineham Parochial Council - The construction of a car parking area to enable safe parking. The construction was successfully completed as planned and proved very useful for several events where previously old and disabled

parishioners would not have been able to attend safely. There have been more than 250 visitors to the church and the parking is also in regular use by those who walk on the public footpaths close by.

## **COVID-19 Grants awarded in December 2020 and March 2021** *(Appendix 2)*

### **Background**

13. Mid Sussex District Council allocated £300,000 of its own revenue funds in 2020, to support community organisations and businesses to adapt operations due to the Covid-19 pandemic.
14. The purpose of the scheme was to provide recovery grants to support the local Voluntary and Community sector to amend/adapt and reconfigure their operations; to not only continue to respond to the Covid-19 pandemic, but to build and adapt for the future.
15. Applications were invited to bid for costs towards:
  - Covid response -additional costs, above and beyond normal running costs.
  - Return to Business as usual - Additional costs associated with reopening and return to Business as Usual
  - Re-align - Adapting the organisation to new delivery or service provision

### **Summary of key points**

- In total, 38 community and voluntary groups were supported by the Covid-19 Recovery Grant Scheme, with funding totalling £119,350
- 24 groups received funding to meet Covid response needs. 10 groups used the funds to re-align their services and 4 organisations funded a return to Business As Usual.
- The funding supported organisations across the district with 34% going towards Mid Sussex wide projects, 31% to the north of the district, 18% to projects in central Mid Sussex and 16% to the south.
- 16 groups (42%) received funding amounts between £3,000-£5,000. 21 groups (55%) were awarded amounts between £1,000 to £3,000. One organisation was awarded over £5,000 in recognition of its long-term project needs and partnership model.
- The funding enabled groups to maintain engagement with clients by funding IT equipment, setting up websites, purchasing PPE to keep venues accessible and setting up buddying projects to maintain engagement with those who were isolating and vulnerable.

### **Ways in which Community Grants have benefited residents**

16. Bolney Community Café Society shelter build costs– to help the café to continue to welcome customers in a Covid safe environment. This was particularly important after Lockdown as it helped the community to tackle loneliness. The shelter allows people to sit outside in all weathers and the screens allow people to sit safely inside. More than 250 people have used the facilities.

17. Friends of Bolney School 'buddy bench' costs – children can sit on the bench if they are feeling sad or anxious and other children and staff can come and check on them. This has proved very useful for children who have returned to the school routine after home school.
18. Crawley Down Phoenix Netball Club and East Grinstead Hockey Club costs towards covered hard standing area – the build of a hard standing area has significantly increased the ability to return to hockey and netball and assisted with the administration of players.
19. St Peter & St James Hospice befriending service – the setup of the Community Reach Telephone Befriending Service helped the workers and the families they support embrace remote communications to stay in touch.

## Financial Implication

20. On the 1 April 2019 the balance held in the Community Development Fund reserve was £168,261, of which £73,757 was committed to projects via the Cabinet Grants Panel in previous years. A further £124,091 was committed during the year.
21. On the 1 April 2020 there was a balance in the Community Development Fund reserve of £100,586, of which £79,225 was committed to projects in prior years and a further £8386 was committed at Cabinet Grants Panel 29 June 2020.
22. At Council on 30 September 2020 £300,000 was allocated from General Reserve to the Community Development Grant reserve for Covid-19 Recovery Grants, of which; £160,189 was allocated to Businesses and £140,835 to Community & Voluntary Sector Organisations.

## Equality and customer service implications

23. As part of the assessment process all the organisations applying for funding from the Council complied with the required conditions of funding and have the requisite policies and procedures in place including any other relevant legislation.

## Sustainability Implications

24. The provision of the Community Grants Programme supports the council's Corporate Priorities, Strong and Resilient Communities and Effective and Responsive Services. It also supports the council's community leadership role in the delivery of local and [UK sustainable development goals](#). Specifically, this service contributes towards:
- 25.



SDG 3:  
(Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages)



SDG 10:  
(Reduce inequality within and among countries)



SG11(Sustainable Cities and Communities)

## **Legal Implications**

26. The Council is not obliged to provide grant funding, but by virtue of section 1 of the Localism Act 2011, it is able to do anything which it considers is likely to achieve the promotion of the economic, social or environmental wellbeing of its area. This includes the incurring of expenditure, giving financial assistance to any person (or organisation) and entering into arrangements or agreements with any person.

## **Background Papers**

Grant applications and associated documentation for the Community grants are held in the Comms, PR and Community Engagement Team.