

## **CORPORATE GRANT SCHEMES**

### **(Covid 19 Recovery Grants – Community and Voluntary Sector Applications)**

**REPORT OF:** HEAD OF CORPORATE RESOURCES

**Contact Officer:** Emma Sheridan; Business Unit Leader Community Services, Policy and Performance

**Email** emma.sheridan@midsussex.gov.uk

**Wards Affected:** All

**Key Decision:** No

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#### **Purpose of the report**

1. The purpose of this report is present to the Cabinet Grants Panel thirty-one applications received from Community and Voluntary Sector organisations, in response to the Mid Sussex Covid 19 Recovery Grant Fund.
2. A separate report will be presented to the Panel regarding applications to this fund that have been received from local businesses.

#### **Recommendations**

3. Members of the Cabinet Grants Panel are recommended to
  - a. **Consider and approve the grant awards proposed in Table 1**
  - b. **Consider and approve the refusal of grant applications as proposed in Table 2**
  - c. **Approve a second grant round of the Covid19 Recovery Fund as proposed in paragraph 25**

#### **Summary**

4. A summary of the applications to be considered and the recommendations from the Community Grants Assessment Group on the level of financial assistance to be awarded to each organisation are detailed as follows:

**Table 1**

<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Grant Purpose</b>	<b>Award Requested</b>	<b>Award Suggested</b>
107 Meridian FM	Home broadcasting equipment for volunteers	£2,280	£2,280
4Sight Vision Support	Costs towards increased newsletter printing and distribution	£868	£868
Aspire Sussex Ltd	Additional cleaning materials for Marle Place centre	£1,000	£1,000
Bolney Community Café Centre	Purchase Covid screens and outdoor shelter	£5,000	£5,000
Concordia	Set up virtual e-learning zone for Youth Action programme	£3,620	£3,620
Crawley and East Grinstead Branch of Parkinson's UK	Develop website to promote services and raise awareness	£1,500	£1,500
East Grinstead Rugby Football Club	Cleaning requirements and sports equipment	£4,492	£4,492
East Grinstead Sports Club	Works to facilitate social distancing measures and regular cleaning regimes for the club	£2,900	£2,900
Friends of Bolney School	Purchase 'Buddy Bench' for children feeling anxious	£176	£176
Handcross Rosemary Club	Cost of Christmas hampers to replace Christmas lunch, monthly tea and visits	£1,000	£1,000
Hope	Fund hall hire where groups can no longer meet in own homes	£992	£992

Hurstpierpoint Gymnastics Club	Additional cleaning materials, equipment and coaches to assist with smaller groups	£5,000	£5,000
Mid Sussex Marlins Swimming Club	Additional pool hire costs to make lessons Covid compliant	£5,000	£5,000
Mid Sussex Older People's Council	Costs towards increased newsletter printing and posting	£1,000	£1,000
Mid Sussex Voluntary Action	Cost of new CRM and to migrate onto Cloud	£5,000	£5,000
Mycarematters 2020 CIC	Set up Buddy system for people struggling to plan for later life and end of life	£5,000	£5,000
Revitalise Respite Holidays	Cost of PPE for the respite centre	£3,600	£3,600
SASBAH	Online workshops	£873	£873
*Slaugham Parish Council	Purchase free standing sanitation stations	£1,500	£1,500
St Peter & St James Hospice	Expansion of telephone befriending service	£2,000	£2,000
The Ashdown Hub CIO	Set up social networking groups (Covid compliant) with expert clinician to advise on wellbeing	£1,210	£1,210
UK Harvest	Food deliveries to vulnerable residents and set up online cheffing course	£5,000	£5,000
Age UK East Grinstead & District	Analysis of survey and purchase new IT, marketing and postage	£5,000	£3,500
Being Neighbourly	Set up website, information packs and social events	£4,965	£2,851
St Peter's Preschool & Toddler Group	New website, film virtual tour and fit new carpet	£1,500	£1,152

Victim Support	Purchase two new laptops for volunteer and Kickstart employee	£2,485	£1,242.50
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£75,313</b>	<b>£70,108.50</b>

**Applications Considered but NO GRANT Award Recommended**

<b>Table 2</b>		
<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Purpose for which grant is sought</b>	<b>Award requested</b>
Christians Against Poverty Debt Centre	Contribution towards emergency aid payments and insolvency/bankruptcy fees for clients	£1,000
Coro Nuovo	Commemoration Concert and bursary costs	£8,000
Hurstpierpoint Scout Group	Lettings and general running costs	£1,000
Haywards Heath Dementia Action Alliance	Set up and deliver services for people living with dementia	£15,000
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£25,000</b>

*\* These applications have been referred to alternative funding streams as detailed in paragraphs 17-20*

## **Background**

5. Mid Sussex District Council has a long history of collaborative community development and engagement with a strong local CVS as well as other local statutory and private sector partners. The impact and legacy of this work and the powerful relationships it has fostered, have been realised in recent months as this Council, its partners and its communities, mobilised to respond to the Covid19 pandemic, attending to the needs of and supporting the vulnerable communities of our District.
6. In recognition of the ongoing challenging environment in which the local CSV sector are operating in, and aware that not all organisations were able to benefit from the Government grant schemes; the Council has established a new grant stream focusing on providing recovery grants to support businesses and the local CSV to amend/adapt and reconfigure their operations; to not only continue to respond to the COVID19 pandemic, but to build and adapt for the future. In recognition of the ongoing challenging environment in which the local CSV sector are operating in, and aware that not all organisations were able to benefit from the Government grant schemes; the Council has established a new grant stream focusing on providing recovery grants to support businesses and the local CSV to amend/adapt and reconfigure their operations; to not only continue to respond to the COVID19 pandemic, but to build and adapt for the future.
7. On 19<sup>th</sup> October Cabinet Grants Panel agreed the criteria for the Covid 19 Recovery grant Fund and the fund was opened to applications on 30<sup>th</sup> October for a period of one calendar month.
8. To ensure that the Community Voluntary Sector were able to take full advantage of the grant scheme, targeted engagement was undertaken by the Community Services Team. This included presenting at two Zoom meetings hosted by Mid Sussex Voluntary Action which outlined the grant offer and application process. 36 organisations attended the meetings. These were followed up with detailed information on how to apply and a FAQ leaflet. A significant amount of time was also given to applicants who needed support with their bids. The quality in the final bids reflects this engagement.

## **Assessment Process**

9. Applications have been assessed against the Covid19 Recovery Grant Criteria as agreed by Cabinet Grants Panel on 19<sup>th</sup> October 2020.

10. The applications from Community and Voluntary Sector Organisations received in this funding round have been considered by the Community Grants Assessment Group comprising relevant officers from Community Services, Policy and Performance, Economic Development, Finance, and unless there was a conflict of interest, the local Council for Voluntary Service have been consulted.
11. The Assessment Group reached a consensus as to the merit of each application judged against the agreed criteria and the level of funding that should be recommended to the Panel.
12. A due diligence exercise has been undertaken on each applicant organisation apply to o ensure that they have met the grant criteria, in particular that they are properly constituted voluntary and not for profit organisations and have provided the relevant legal and financial information to support assessment of their application.

### **Grants Recommended for approval under the Covid19 Recovery Fund**

13. Fourteen Organisations have applied for funding to re-model, adapt and in many cases increase their communication channels to continue and extend their reach with their service users. Communication has been greatly affected by Covid for CVS groups that have not been able to meet in person and have had to adapt the ways in which they continue to keep the essential levels of contact with their, frequently vulnerable users. These bids include continuing to deliver live community radio with home broadcasting equipment for volunteers, costs towards increased expenditure on printing and distribution, setting up new and developing existing websites and online platforms for e-learning.
14. Ten organisations have applied for funding to purchase additional equipment, PPE and resources to make their services Covid safe. This includes improvements to facilitate safer social distancing and segregated access routes, additional coaching hours and resources to enable smaller numbers in classes to Covid screens.
15. Three groups have applied to fund changes in how they deliver their community services; replacing the usual Christmas lunch for older residents with home delivered hampers, venue costs to meet in halls where they have traditionally met in private homes and the purchase of a buddy bench for school children to combat anxiety and promote positive mental health.

### **Grants recommended for approval under the Covid19 Emergency Fund**

16. In June 2020, following receipt of additional Government funds (the Covid19 Emergency Fund) to support District, Town and Parish Councils in their immediate

response to Covid19; the Leader of this Council wrote to Town and Parish Councils informing them of funds available to support them in their response to the COVID19 pandemic. Slaugham Parish Council has requested funds in the sum of £1,500 from this fund in contribution to the additional costs they have and will incur in the coming months.

### **Grants not recommended for approval under the Covid19 Recovery Fund**

17. The application from Coro Nuovo, which is for a community choir event and music bursaries, has been referred to the Community and Economic Development Grant Fund for consideration in 2021. Under current Covid restrictions some of the activity for which the funding has been requested is not encouraged. Moreover, the application whilst referencing the pandemic does not meet the criteria of the Covid19 Recovery Fund and is better suited to the criteria of the CED Grant Fund.
18. The application from the Haywards Heath Dementia Action Alliance is, in consultation and with the agreement of the applicants, being instead considered for in year funding via the Wellbeing Service with a view to developing a Service Level Agreement for future years. This is considered a more appropriate funding stream for this workstream given that Dementia is a key priority for Public Health as well as the district council and the wider Mid Sussex Partnership.
19. The grant application submitted by Christians Against Poverty does not meet the criteria for this fund as is intended to provide individual hardship payments. Other support channels for this type of need exist both locally and at county level and officers have highlight these in the application feedback.
20. The grant application submitted by Hurstpierpoint Scout Group application does not meet the criteria for this fund as it relates specifically to core running costs which does not fall under the approved criteria for this fund. Officers from the Community services team have referred them to colleagues administering the government business and discretionary grant schemes which do cover core costs.

### **Other Options Considered:**

Alternative options considered are:

21. fund from the COVID19 Recovery Fund.  
In this unprecedented time for the community and nation during a worldwide pandemic withdrawing support is not considered a viable option when so many local businesses and communities are not only looking to the council for support but can make use of

COVID19 Recovery grant funding to lever in additional support from other grant making bodies and national schemes. In addition, to not adapt that programme to take account of the changed world in which the Council and its communities are now in would be to risk the recovery of our economy and with that the resilience and future prosperity of Mid Sussex as a District.

### **Financial Implications**

22. Covid19 Recovery Grants are funded through a dedicated reserve. The agreed Fund total is £300k and this report represents the first call on that Fund.
23. Grant applications that have been recommended have had all accounts/financial data assessed and audited by finance with all due diligence undertaken.
24. The total amount of the Covid19 Grants for the Community Voluntary Sector proposed in this Cabinet Grants Panel report is £68,608.50 (this excludes £1,500 recommended to be awarded from the Covid Emergency Fund). The total amount of grants proposed by Economic Development is £84,615. If all grants are approved, the amount remaining will be a total of £146,776.50 available for the second round.
25. Whilst interest in and demand for the COVID19 recovery fund has been high, given that funds remain unallocated after the initial invitation to bid, it was proposed that a second grant round invite applications from 15<sup>th</sup> December 2020 to 15<sup>th</sup> January 2021 with any second-round grant awards being determined by the MSDC Cabinet Grants Panel on 14<sup>th</sup> March 2021

### **Risk Management Implications**

26. The main associated risks that may impact upon the successful implementation of the decisions arising from this report would be the inability of the funded organisations to carry out the services, activities or equipment purchase for which funding had been awarded.
27. A Contract is signed at the application stage by organisations seeking funding that details the terms and conditions under which the grant is given, including the return of all monies to the Council should the purpose for which the funds are awarded not materialise.
28. All organisations in receipt of grant funds are requested to complete an End of Grant Report at the end of the funding period and required to submit information relating to the grant including purchase invoices, details of the number of residents benefiting from the grant, annual accounts, how the grant was used etc.

29. It is considered that these measures would mitigate the main risks from materialising and indicate a low risk to the successful outcomes arising from this report.

### **Equality and customer service implications**

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

### **Legal Implications**

31. 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**

32. Cabinet Grants Panel report of 14<sup>th</sup> October 2020 including agreed Covid19 Recovery Grant Criteria
33. Copies of the original grant applications are held on file by the Community Service team