

# COVID-19 RECOVERY GRANT SCHEME – COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTARY SECTOR APPLICATIONS

## REPORT OF: HEAD OF CORPORATE RESOURCES

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**Wards Affected:** All

**Key Decision:** No

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### Purpose of the report

1. The purpose of this report is to present to the Cabinet Grants Panel twenty applications received from Community and Voluntary Sector organisations, in response to the Mid Sussex Covid19 Recovery Grant Fund (Second Round).
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**

### 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: Grant Applications Recommended for Approval**

Organisation	Grant Purpose	Award Requested	Award Suggested
Action in Rural Sussex (AirS)	Establish a Centre Manager Steering Group for community halls and similar buildings to support recovery from Covid19 closures and the impacts of related restrictions. Develop a dedicated 'Basecamp' online forum and message board for Mid Sussex. The grant would fund the website development and training and associated staffing costs.	£5,000	£5,000
Ansty Village Centre Trust	Support additional costs to the fit out of the new village centre to meet a post Covid19 standard. The grant would fund installation of electronic door access control and proximity taps.	£8,000	£5,000
Aspire Sussex Ltd	Purchase digital hardware to enable tutors to put courses online and interact remotely with students.	£3,764	£3,764
Being Neighbourly East Grinstead	Purchase standalone android tablet for the senior administrator responsible for volunteer task allocation and monitoring.	£270	£270
Befriended	Easter basket with an Easter egg and related seasonal items with a hand-written letter to hand delivered to isolated older people. Basket estimated to cost £5.00 x100 residents.	£1,000	£1,000
Burgess Hill Community Radio	Purchase equipment which will improve the service offered to users and allow more presenters to work from home, along with equipment to ensure studios are Covid secure.	£3,500	£3,500

Burgess Hill Guide Hall	Purchase of PPE, enhanced cleaning equipment and consumables, notices, signs.	£1,000	£1,000
Coro Nuovo	COVID-19 Commemoration concert (pending restrictions that may be in place) - free to frontline NHS workers	£2,000	£2,000
Crawley Down Phoenix Netball Club*	To construct a covered hard standing area to enhance the ability to provide refreshment, food and social facilities for parents & players.	£5,000	£5,000
Dicker House Preschool	A year's supply of cleaning products to help ensure Preschool remains as clean and sterile as possible to help combat the risk of COVID-19 within the setting.	£1,000	£1,000
East Grinstead Hockey Club*	To construct a covered hard standing area to enhance the ability to provide refreshment, food and social facilities for parents & players.	£5,000	£5,000
East Grinstead Meads Football Club	Provision of shed / hut so refreshments can be provided outdoors for parents attending whilst their children take part in football training and matches.	£5,000	£5,000
East Grinstead Tennis, Squash and Racketball Club	Fund the provision of an outside shelter and tennis ball feeder allowing individuals to practice on their own.	£4,877	£4,877
Haywards Heath Dementia Friendly Community	Support planned work for 2021 across the three towns - Haywards Heath, East Grinstead and Burgess Hill- including work in schools, local businesses, collaboration with primary care, cafes, pop up events and local groups, minority groups and rural areas.	£15,000	£15,000
Hurstpierpoint Village Centre	Purchase audio-visual equipment for the Village centre to enable residents to attend in person and remotely.	£5,000	£5,000

The Escape Youth Club	Purchase equipment to allow use of outside space – cover and seating.	£5,000	£4,315
The Kings Church	Re-Work Programme - a free course that equips anyone who has lost their job during the pandemic with the skills, mind-set and confidence they need to re-enter the workplace.	£4,000	£4,000
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£74,411</b>	<b>£70,726</b>

\* The bids from CD Phoenix Netball Club and EG Hockey Club are joint applications to meet the demands of both clubs in the same setting.

**Table 2: Applications Considered but NO GRANT Award Recommended**

<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Purpose for which grant is sought</b>	<b>Award requested</b>
Chequer Mead Arts & Community Trust	Retrospective grant for IT system already purchased.	£4,966
East Grinstead Sports Club Ltd	To purchase and install a permanent barrier.	£1,500
The Rawson Hall	Cover lost income and expenses.	£10,000
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£16,466</b>

## **Background**

5. In recognition of the ongoing challenging environment in which the local Community and Voluntary Sector (CVS) are operating as a result of the Covid19 pandemic, and aware that not all organisations were able to benefit from the Government grant schemes, Mid Sussex District Council established a new grant stream in 2020. The new fund focuses on the provision of recovery grants to support businesses and the local CVS to amend/adapt and reconfigure their operations, not only to continue to respond to the COVID19 pandemic, but to build and adapt for the future.
6. On 19th October Cabinet Grants Panel agreed the criteria for the Covid 19 Recovery Grant Fund and it was opened to applications in October 2020. Thirty-one applications were received from the CVS, of which twenty-six groups were awarded funds totalling £70,108.50.
7. Whilst interest in and demand for the COVID19 recovery fund was high, some funds remained unallocated after the initial invitation to bid and the Panel approved a second grant round, inviting applications from 15th December 2020 to 15th January 2021.
8. To ensure that the CVS were able to take full advantage of this second round, targeted engagement was undertaken by the Community Services Team. This included a Zoom meeting, attended by 11 organisations, hosted by Mid Sussex Voluntary Action which outlined the grant offer and application process. This was followed up with detailed advice on the application process and ongoing 1:1 support for applicants as required.

## **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, Revenues and Benefits, 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.

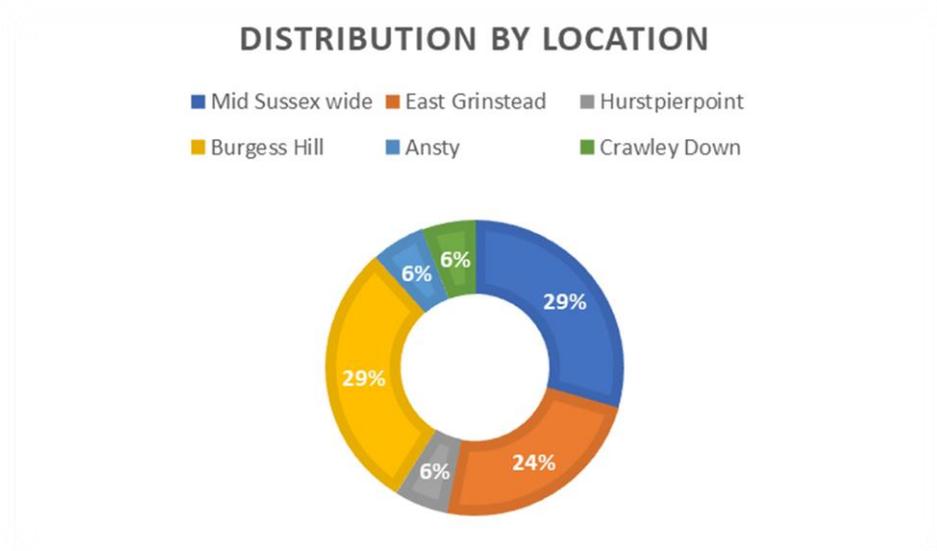
12. A due diligence exercise has been undertaken on each applicant organisation to ensure that they have met the grant criteria, in particular that they are a properly constituted voluntary and not for profit organisation and have provided the relevant legal and financial information to support assessment of their application.

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

13. Five organisations have applied for funding to improve their facilities to accommodate and encourage attendance to their sessions/services. With the upcoming easing of COVID19 lockdown restrictions, the grant will enable a number of sports clubs to open and be fully compliant with Covid19-safe operation. The applications from Crawley Down Phoenix Netball Club and East Grinstead Hockey Club are linked bids to support a proposed improved to their shared facility. The application from the youth club will allow it to expand their offer to include outdoor activities and increase the current numbers attending.
14. Two applications have been received from village halls to improve facilities and update their ability to provide a digital offer. Village halls have struggled to stay open for their users under Covid19 restrictions. This has had a significant impact on communities where village halls provide a central and integral part of community life. The funds proposed will allow the halls to open safely and widen their reach by recognising the increased and likely ongoing importance of digital communication to complement their traditional offer of opening a physical venue.
15. Five organisations have applied to enhance their offer by introducing, improving and adding to their digital offer. This includes a specific service to provide increased networking and infrastructure support to those operating and managing village halls - to connect and be connected, strengthening the reach of a local radio station, broadening access to interactive online education lessons, support to find employment and enabling a small community group to communicate more effectively to respond to user needs.
16. Two groups have requested funding to support the additional costs of PPE equipment that will enable them to operate in a Covid secure environment.
17. Three groups have applied to fund changes in how they deliver their community services; replacing the usual Easter events with Easter baskets and visits for isolated older people, a plan to hold a Covid commemoration concert to remember those who have lost their lives, and a project to connect and re-connect those living with dementia and their carers. The Dementia Action Alliance project was submitted in the last round but was initially referred to alternative funding streams. Following further

investigations, however, it has been concluded that the Covid-19 Recovery Fund is the most suitable funding source for the project as at present no alternative funding streams are available.

18. The pie chart below illustrates the successful applications received by location. In summary, 29% were for Mid Sussex wide projects, 29% for Burgess Hill, 24% for East Grinstead, and 6% for Hurstpierpoint, Ansty and Crawley Down respectively.



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

19. Chequer Mead Arts & Community Trust have applied to fund equipment that has already been purchased. The fund criteria does not permit retrospective award.
20. The application from the East Grinstead Sports Club Ltd requests funds to install a permanent structural barrier which does not fall under the criteria for this grant fund. The group has been referred to the Business grants and has made an application.
21. The grant application submitted by the Rawson Hall requests funds for lost income and expenses which does not meet any criteria set for this fund. The group have been referred to the Business and Discretionary grants.

#### **Other Options Considered:**

Alternative options considered are:

22. To not fund the applications outlined above 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**

23. As agreed by Council on 30 September 2020, the sum of £300,000 was transferred to the Community Development Fund Reserve, from General Reserve, for a Covid-19 Recovery Fund for local businesses and organisations. This report represents the second call on that Fund
24. The first round of grant fund saw the Commitment of £70,108.50 to the Community and Voluntary Sector and £77,786 to local businesses. This left £152,105.50 uncommitted for an agreed Second round.
25. As at 23 February, the amount paid against commitments totalled £42,790.
26. The total amount of the Covid19 Grants for the Community Voluntary Sector proposed in this Cabinet Grants Panel report is £70,726. The total amount of grants proposed by Economic Development in their following report is £82,402.90. If all grants are approved, the total spend will be £153,128.90. This gives a slight overspend of £1,023.40 which is proposed to be covered by the available underspend of £1,278 by the grants claimed to date from awards to business in the first round.
27. Grant applications that have been recommended have had all accounts/financial data assessed and audited by finance with all due diligence undertaken.

### **Risk Management Implications**

28. 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.
29. Where applications reference physical works to properties, applicants will be required to ensure that the project has all the necessary permissions in place (including planning, building regulations, licensing and from landlords) prior to completion.
30. 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.

31. 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.
32. 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**

33. 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**

34. 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**

35. Cabinet Grants Panel report of 19<sup>th</sup> October 2020 including agreed Covid19 Recovery Grant Criteria  
<https://midsussex.moderngov.co.uk/documents/g2391/Public%20reports%20pack%2019th-Oct-2020%2016.00%20Cabinet%20Grants%20Panel.pdf?T=10>
36. Cabinet grants Panel reports of 25<sup>th</sup> January 2021 for first round awards  
<https://midsussex.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=162&MId=2395>
37. Copies of the original grant applications are held on file by the Community Service team