

Board/Committee:	GRANTS SUB BOARD
Date of meeting:	Thursday, 7 December, 2023
Title:	Community Grant Fund Applications
Author:	Head of Corporate Policy and Community Safety
Status:	For Recommendation

Purpose

To provide a summary of each application received to the Community Fund in this funding period in order that members can determine if they wish to award grant funding for each proposal as set out in this report. A list of all applications made to date with amounts requested is in Appendix 1

Recommendation

That the Board:

- Consider the applications outlined in the report

1.0 Background

1.1 Members will recall at the Policy and Organisation Board of 30th November 2022 that the Council agreed to set up a new Community Fund to offer grants to local community projects and first Grants Sub Board met in March to award grants and make recommendations to applicants.

1.2 Following the September Board, the Community Fund grant guidance and application form were amended to reflect the changes agreed by members of the Grants Sub Board.

1.3 The most notable changes made were to reduce the maximum award to £5,000 effective from future rounds and to emphasise the desirability of evidence of some match funding rather than requests for the full cost amount or full award possible.

1.4 This report summarises the applications made to the Community Fund since the September Grant Sub Board meeting and includes any that were deferred or advised to resubmit from that round. All applications received and verified to date are included as part of this report after which any received may be submitted as a late item.

1.5 The Community Fund has the following priorities and applicants are asked to identify which of the following their project will help to address:

- a) Enhancing community places and spaces;
- b) Bringing people together and building stronger communities;
- c) Improving sustainability and tackling climate change;
- d) Developing people, skills and opportunities.

1.6

The Community Fund guidance advises that funding awards will be looked on more favourably where applications can demonstrate:

- a) A strong evidence of need;
- b) The proposed approach is likely to achieve the desired outcomes;
- c) The application does not contain high revenue costs that cannot be sustained long term;
- d) A lasting benefit can be achieved;
- e) It meets more than one of the four funding priorities;
- f) Match funding is provided;
- g) It will benefit a significant number of people;
- h) Public benefit outweighs any private gain.

2.0 Report

2.1 Accounts has confirmed that there is a total of **£35,877** available in the Community Fund for this round, of which **£13,022** is available from the Council General Fund and **£22,855** is available from the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL Neighbourhood Fund).

2.2 It is noted that the CIL balance has taken into account the pending deduction of £8,000 for two September grant applications of £4,000.

2.3 For this round of Community Grant Awards the Council received eight new applications two deferred ones and two previous pending awards, which are summarised in this report for consideration.

3.0 **Gosport Allotment Holders & Gardeners Association**

3.1 Members will recall a grant award of £4,000 was approved at September Board to the Gosport Allotment Holders & Gardeners Association for a store building on the Manor Way allotment site pending successful planning permission being granted for the new allotment site. A decision on the planning permission for the site has not yet been made, so the award is still pending.

4.0 **Rowner Bowling Club**

4.1 Members will also recall that at September Board it agreed in principle that they would make a contribution of £4,000 for a new fox proof fence as set out in the grant application by Rowner Bowling Club.

4.2 Officers have now clarified the terms of the lease and considered that a grant is the most appropriate funding option.

4.3 Following an enquiry to the Council's Planning Team it has been confirmed that planning permission is not required for the erection of the fence.

4.4 As this is a large animal proof fence it is classed as a tenant's alteration and when installed a Licence for Alterations will be required from the Council. The Council's Commercial Property Team will action this.

As the new fence is a "tenant's fixture" the club will be wholly responsible for repairs and maintenance going forward. At the end of the lease, the fence and any other tenant's fixtures may be required to be removed by the landlord.

4.5 The Board is requested to formally approve the grant award of £4,000 agreed in principle in September to the Rowner Bowling Club as a contribution towards the new fence.

5.0 **Willow Incredible Garden**

5.1 A decision on this application was deferred from the September Board as no representative from the project was available to attend. Since then a site visit by the Grants Sub Board was carried out on 26 October.

5.2 The Willow Group and the Integrated Care Board in partnership with Love Outdoors, a Community Interest Company, is seeking **£5,840** or 8.75% of the total cost of £66,710 to repurpose 250 square meters of unused leased land adjacent to Forton Medical Centre, Whites Place, during two stages into a community wellbeing garden. The lease runs until at least 2028 and the project's operations manager has written evidence from the landlord, Primary Health Properties, that the lease will be renewed.

5.3 The requested funds will enable the partnership to complete Stage 1 of the project that includes the purchase and installation of an open wooden outdoor learning space. The application includes a breakdown of the costs for the structure itself and seating which was circulated to the Grants Sub Board after the September meeting.

5.4 The partners maintain this project meets all four of the funds priorities and represents a non-traditional and innovative approach to health care and will be accessible to a wide range of people to help improve their physical and mental wellbeing. There are already regular weekly groups of volunteers and special events and growing projects taking place involving different ages and abilities.

5.5 Stage 2 of the project is called Heart of Surgery and involves a contemplative garden, seating, screening and sensory planting. The partnership is growing with significant match funding in place from staff costs, in kind donations and other successful grant applications. The project is anticipated to be completed by August 2024.

6.0 **Hub4Stuff**

6.1 Hub4Stuff is a voluntary organisation established in March 2022 to collect unwanted but useable furniture and deliver it free of charge to those in need and is seeking **£1,500** or approximately 25% of its annual operating costs to help meet local need.

6.2 It covers all of Gosport and accepts both direct requests and referrals from the team at Agnew House and Barclay House and the Council's Housing Services, including supporting refugees.

6.3 The group is run entirely by volunteers and also provides training and volunteering opportunities to help those in the local community develop practical skills.

6.4 Since March 2022 it has helped approximately 600 families with 1,400 items of furniture; monthly this is an average of 30 families/individuals and 70 items of furniture collected and delivered.

6.5 The group's main costs are the running and maintenance of the van. It also pays to have donated washing machines serviced before passing them on, and purchases new microwaves when no second-hand ones are available. This ensures that those with no oven have a means of preparing a cooked

meal.

6.6 The application has included a detailed breakdown of costs for fuel, van and liability insurance, van repairs and MOT, purchase of microwaves when necessary, servicing of washing machines, and other tools, parts and equipment totalling £5,978.

7.0 Lee Rangers Football Club

.1 Since its launch, the group has raised funds through a combination of grants and donations along with over £5,000 from its own fund-raising efforts. It is confident with the requested grant it can continue to sustain the service long-term.

7.2 This non-profit club based in Lee-on-the-Solent is seeking **£1,000** or 100% of the cost for team equipment for its adult team.

7.3 Lee Rangers Youth Football Club was founded in 1989. Over 30 years later it says it remains an all-inclusive organisation where the focus is on all players developing their abilities and having fun rather than winning.

7.4 In June 2019 it merged with the established adult team Lee Community Football Club to create Lee Rangers Football Club. The objective of the newly created club is to provide children with an introduction and an ongoing pathway to football participation and enjoyment from youth level all the way up to adult level.

7.5 The funds would be used to buy footballs, replace damaged equipment and to help to keep contributions towards training costs low for its 26 members as some are struggling now to meet these costs. The club said it would meet its future costs through fundraising in the community.

8.0 Green Dragon Football Club

8.1 This application was presented to the Board in September, but a decision was deferred pending the submission of missing information and supporting documentation which has now been received.

8.2 This is a Sunday League football club operating out of Nobes Avenue and Brookers Field and is seeking **£2,300** or 98% of costs to provide team jackets to its 47 players at a cost of £49.50 each.

8.3 The club has two teams, the Green Dragon First in Division 1 and the Green Dragon Reserves in Division 3. Funds would be used to minimise the financial costs to team players to participate by providing team jackets.

8.4 Registration fees of £650 and previous sponsorship by donors of £2,000 has enabled the club to purchase footballs, water bottles, first aid kits and other sports equipment.

8.5 The application also states the club meets at least twice a week and uses its platform in a positive way by holding annual charity days.

9.0 Gosport Rovers Football Club

9.1 This is a Sunday league football club in Gosport is seeking **£3,000** towards the purchase of new team equipment.

9.2 The application does not state how many current members it has or provide a cost breakdown or description of the equipment it would buy with the grants award.

9.3 Supporting documentation and more details about the club's request for funding has been requested. The club is in the process of setting up its bank account. The organiser is aware the application could be deferred to

a following round if the information is not received.

10.0 Gosport Borough Cricket Club

10.1 Based at the Clock Tower Pavilion, Privett Park, the Cricket Club is an amateur sports club affiliated with the England & Wales Cricket Board as well as the Hampshire Cricket Board.

10.2 The Club had successfully submitted an application to the Board in September for the replacement of the current cricket nets. However, after the Board meeting the club withdrew its application after confirmation that the installation of additional vermin nets by the Council was agreed as an acceptable alternative.

10.3 The current application is asking for **£3,042** or 90.4% of the total costs for two Sight Screens, an accreditation requirement of the Southern Premier Cricket League (SPCL) and also mandatory in the higher divisions of the Hampshire Cricket League (HCL) and replacement netting for the club's mobile practice cage.

10.4 Sight Screens enable batters to see a red or white ball more clearly and are therefore considered to be a health and safety aid and would benefit all adults teams and the Junior teams who play with a hard ball.

10.5 The specific sight screens requested are made by only one company and are reversible i.e. they have a white side for red ball cricket and a black side for white ball cricket. Black sight screens are needed for the higher level cricket played in the SPCL.

10.6 The Club states having quality sight screens enhances the ground and ensures it keep its accreditation and enhances Privett Park as an attractive place to play cricket.

10.7 The mobile cage is an essential piece of practice equipment for all members. It can be used on grass wickets rather than astro turf wickets and therefore enables players of all ages to practice on grass for a more realistic experience.

10.8 The Club has provided a cost breakdown for the sight screens and the replacement mobile practice cage.

11.0 Mend & Tend- Gosport Voluntary Action

11.1 This is a registered charity (1087177) providing an independent not-for-profit garden and home maintenance services for local residents who are older, vulnerable or have a disability and would like to continue living independently in their own home. The service is seeking **£4,117.50** or 50% of the total cost to continue this service for another year.

11.2 In the last tax year, Mend & Tend provided support to 202 residents in the Gosport Borough. The team provided 3,689 hours of gardening support & 519 hours of repairs/décor support. April 2023 – September 2023 has already seen 63 new customer applications, indicating there is a great need for this service to continue.

11.3 With the cost-of-living crisis, some of the Borough's most vulnerable residents are needing to prioritise their outgoing costs. The service states an unkempt garden and home will affect mental health & wellbeing, increase risk of injury and falls and can also attract scammers for doorstep crime.

11.4 Mend & Tend also offers flexible self-employed working opportunities to local people. Recruitment and vetting is ongoing to support new customer demand each year. The workers often develop friendships with their

customers that can provide some companionship and a link to GVA for further community support and signposting and provide an opportunity for workers to build their skills.

- 11.5 To provide this service staff and volunteer hours are required. Customers in general, are not online and do not have access to technology for online registration or payments and require a personal response to match them with their worker. Workers must be interviewed, vetted, allocated and monitored.
- 11.6 The application has provided a cost breakdown of the administration tasks and costs for the service and staff cost are estimated at approximately 35% of the total £4,117.50 requested or £1,440. The remaining 65% of costs cover other direct costs and overheads of the service.
- 12.0 **Gosport and District Sports Association for the Disabled (GADSAD)**
- 12.1 GADSAD is a registered charity (278177) located in Elson and has been providing a meeting place and sporting activities to those disabled people for the past 45 years and is run by a small team of eight dedicated volunteers. Its Friday Night Club meets the fund priorities of bringing people together and building stronger communities & developing people skills and opportunities.
- 12.2 It has 40 members currently with a range of disabilities from learning difficulties, sight loss and anxiety and from a range of ages and backgrounds. The charity is seeking **£4,935** or 100% of the costs to maintain its weekly Friday Night Club and has provided a breakdown of costs for minibus hire, new equipment and hall hire to keep the club going.
- 12.3 Local minibus costs are broke down £45 x 49 local trips and £90 x 4 away games for a total of £2,565; Hall hire charges are £30 x 49 at £1,470 and new sports equipment to replace used at £900.
- 12.4 The club charges its members an annual membership fee of £12 and does do its own fundraising, but is seeking a grant award to help keep membership costs down and ensure it can continue to provide accessible transport for its members locally and to sporting matches at other disabled clubs in the South East
- 13.0 **The Ritz at St. Vincent**
- 13.1 The voluntary organisation based at St. Vincent College is seeking **£1,221** or 25% of its anticipated running costs to promote the community cinema across the Borough during 2024 to increase attendance and become self-sustainable.
- 13.2 It has been operating since May 2017, screening a film once a fortnight in term time and showing a mix of recent releases and classic films and occasional offering one off special event screenings.
- 13.3 Since the pandemic the cinema has found it difficult to attract audiences at the level it achieved before the pandemic and seen a rise in its running costs.
- 13.4 During its 2022/23 season, the cinema had 646 admissions, an average of 32 people per event. The organisation estimates that 1,000 admissions or an average of 48 people per event would enable it to become financially sustainable.
- 13.5 A cost breakdown of the organisation's running costs was provided with its

application. On its current reserves, the cinema could maintain its operations for another two months. Its most significant increase in running costs has been the steep increase in venue hire.

- 13.6** The funds requested are specifically for an advertising campaign to raise awareness of the cinema and increase its audience and to cover the increased running costs during the campaign period. The organisation hopes that by next summer, it will have a larger audience and become sustainable.
- 14.0 Gosport Community Cinema**
- 14.1** This is an unincorporated voluntary organisation aiming to combat loneliness and social isolation and improve health outcomes through the screening of a film as social events and is seeking £4,966 or 36% of its total project costs.
- 14.2** The Next Steps for Gosport Community Cinema 2024 project is seeking funding to continue its programme of films during the day once a month into next Spring to include an additional screening on a weekday morning once per month and schedule occasional Saturday night screenings.
- 14.3** The organisation's original seed funding came from The British Association of Film Societies (trading as "Cinema For All"). It operates primarily from Thorngate Halls, but also holds cinematic events in other parts of the Borough.
- 14.4** It has on average 50 patrons at each of its daytime screenings and 100 patrons at a weekend screening. Current ticket price is £3 for daytime shows and £7 for a Saturday show. The price of day time shows may increase to £4 at some point in 2024. For daytime shows carers are admitted for free. Popcorn, tea and coffee is on a "pay as you feel" donation Basis.
- 14.5** The organisation states there is an emphasis on hospitality to enhance a social experience; volunteers spend time chatting with patrons about the film, serve tea and snacks and run a raffle and local musicians often perform before and after the screenings.
- 14.6** Gosport Community Cinema states commercial sponsorship is the most achievable mechanism to keep tickets affordable and grow the audience. This grant request is to allow it to build upon its success in 2023 and continue to provide the service from January to April 2024 until sustainable sponsorship is secured.
- 14.7** The organisation states it has committed £5,000 of its own resources and has identified in kind donations of £8,938 towards the project.
- 15.0 Next Steps**
- 15.1** Subject to Members' decisions on each of the applications, the grants officer will advise the applicant accordingly and where necessary ask for any outstanding information.
- 15.2** Upon satisfactory receipt of all information required, the Grants Officer will ensure the applicant signs the Grant Agreement that will include the relevant checks to ensure that the organisation has a bona fide bank account.
- 15.3** Members are advised at the next Board the outcome of this process and which grants have been issued and whether any matters have arisen as

part of this checking process.

16.0 Risk Assessment

16.1 There will always be an element of a risk when issuing grants to a third party organisation. The Council have financial and legal due diligence measures in place to ensure that the risks are minimised and will not issue any grants until the Council is satisfied that these measures have been satisfied.

16.2 The Grant Agreement forms are part of the measures to ensure the money is used for the purposes set out in the application and agreed by the Sub-Board.

17.0 Conclusion

17.1 This report summarises the applications made to the Council's Community Grants Fund and received by the Grants Officer in time for this report.

Financial Services comments:	Contained within this report
Legal Services comments:	There are no legal implications with respect to the process. The applications are solely to be judged by the relevant Sub-Board within the existing policy framework.
Equality and Diversity:	Community Fund application form template and guidance was reviewed by the Council's Equality & Diversity Lead Officer
Climate Change implications:	Not applicable
Crime and Disorder:	Not Applicable
Corporate Plan:	Grant applications empower residents to help contribute to the six strategic priorities
Risk Assessment:	Contained within the report
Background Papers:	Community Fund Guidance
Appendices:	Appendix 1 Table of Applications received to date
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