

Report No.4

Report to Town Council 9th July 2013

Community Grants

1. Purpose of the report

- 1.1 To recommend to Full Council that that this year the sum of £6,000 be made available for distribution as grants to local community groups under the provisions of section 137.
- 1.2 To discuss an application form, timing and method of distribution of the grants.

2. Background

- 2.1 A core objective agreed by the Town Council is to develop a new Grant Award Scheme based upon the funds provided by the recent rise in local council tax. (This calculates to a figure a little under £6,000).
- 2.2 The Town Council is empowered to distribute such grants under the Local Government Act 1972 section 137, which provides the ability for local councils to incur expenditure which in their opinion is in the best interests of, and will bring direct benefit to, their area or all or some of the inhabitants.

There are limitations on the use of section 137 of the Local Government Act and any perceived benefit must be commensurate with the expenditure to be incurred. The expenditure must be of direct benefit to inhabitants and not to just a few individuals although this does not preclude the making of donations to local organisations that in turn help local individuals in need.

The expenditure is only open to challenge by the auditor or a local government elector objecting at the audit on the basis that the expenditure is larger than the direct benefit to the area or to residents would justify.

Therefore this scheme will not be for individuals to apply for funds, but for local community groups and charities where the grant will be used to benefit a group of inhabitants, not individuals.

- 2.3 The scheme would run as follows:

At least one award is made at every Full Town Council meeting up to a maximum of £500 until May 2014:

Applications are to be sent in prior to this to meet a set date, then circulated for Councillors views. When an indication of support is received the applicant will be invited to attend the Full Council Meeting to give a brief resume of the circumstances surrounding the application, when it will be formerly voted on. This will be a condition of the grant. Once the grant is received and used, then the applicant will be invited back to a future meeting to report to Full Council how it was used. Again, this will be a condition of the grant. (A proforma application form is attached). The administration of the scheme will be overseen by Policies and Resources Committee.

3. Proposals

3.1 To propose and recommend that for this year (until May 2014) the sum of £6,000 be made available for distribution as grants to local community groups under the provisions of section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972.

3.2 To propose:

- that at least one award is made at every full Town Council meeting up to a maximum of £500 (until May 2014)
- that applications are made by local groups or charities to benefit a number of residents
- that applications are reviewed and voted on by the full Council
- that there are conditions to the grant that the applicant must attend the full Council meeting to explain the circumstances of the grant application and also report back to a future meeting of how the grant was used.
- That the Council approves usage of the pro forma grant application form.

4. Financial Implications and risks

4.1 £6,000 will need to be earmarked from reserves and paid out over the year until May 2014. Minimal staff time/ costs for administration of paperwork.

5. Recommendations

5.1 It is recommended that Full Council agree to the proposals put forward in 3.1 and 3.2.

Cllr. Kim Power
(Ch. P & R)
21st June 2013