

Date: 05 August 2021

Title: Report Item 11 – Council Grant scheme

By: K Larkin (Parish Clerk)

Purpose: To report on applications received to date

Recommendation: a) To consider a request for a grant from Wealden Citizens Advice
b) To consider a request for a grant from Cuckmere Buses

1. Introduction and Budgetary Provision

The parish council at their meeting on 29 July 2021 resolved to re-launch their grant scheme in 2021/22 to assist village organisations and locally based charities in starting up again after the lockdown, and with other suitable projects. The parish council has set aside a budget of £2,000 for donations in 2021/22, of which £203 has been spent and £500 has been reserved for the council's Charity of the Year (the Beachy Head Chaplaincy). A sum of £1,297 remains.

No time limit has been placed on applications, and it is anticipated that some applications will come in during the autumn.

Two applications have so far been received and are detailed below.

2. Wealden Citizens' Advice

The application states that a grant of £250 is requested:

To contribute to the running costs of the service for East Dean & Friston residents, which can be accessed via phone, email, text or appointments (once our offices re-open) at one of our 3 sites - Crowborough, Hailsham or Uckfield as well as our outreach locations in Heathfield, Polegate and Willingdon. Although our service is mainly staffed by volunteers, we still require staff to supervise, train and manage the service. We need to maintain our IT system for effective record keeping and to enable us to communicate effectively with and on behalf of our clients. We also need to cover day to day running costs.

As in previous years we fund our work with applications to the District, Town and Parish Councils in Wealden. We also apply for funding from East Sussex County Council, charitable foundations and other grant giving organisations, including the Lottery and Sussex Community Foundation. We have an SLA with Wealden DC, a rolling SLA with Uckfield, Crowborough and Hailsham TC. Please see attached annual accounts for a full breakdown.

The annual accounts referred to have been circulated to councillors separately.

3. Cuckmere Community Bus Ltd

The application states that a grant of £500 is requested:

We provide a Community Bus Service in and around the Cuckmere Valley area. On Tuesdays and Thursdays our service 41 provides return trips from the East Dean and Friston Downlands Estate, and the old village, into Eastbourne. We are a charity and rely heavily on donations from the public, local authorities and others to support the operations of the overall business. Donations meet a significant proportion of our annual cash operating costs. Although we receive support from ESCC and WDC, this is not sufficient to cover all the operating costs of providing the rural bus services. Without donation support CCB would be operating at a deficit which could lead to reduced services.

Although separate commercial arrangements exist with ED&FPC for our Tuesday service 41, we suspended these April '20 - July '21 owing to the reduced passenger numbers as result of the pandemic. After periods of lockdown and reduced services since March '20 for all our routes, we returned to full operation in April 2021 but it is taking time for passenger numbers to return to near pre-pandemic levels. The grant is requested as a contribution towards the suspended arrangement mentioned above (up to the time of suspension the payment by ED&FPC was around £600per quarter). ED&FPC kindly made a grant to the charity of £500 in Autumn 2020.

The normal commercial charging arrangement referred to above is intended to resume for the quarter from 1st July to 30th September 2021. The parish council in fact has a separate budget head for payments to the Cuckmere Buses, because of the normal commercial charging arrangements. The budget for 2021/22 is £2,800 and none has yet been spent.