

**VOLUNTARY SUPPORT GRANT COMMITTEE held at ZOOM on MONDAY,
15 FEBRUARY 2021 at 11.00 am**

Present: Councillor N Hargreaves
Councillors C Day, P Lees and J Lodge

Officers in attendance: F Gardiner (Communities Manager), C Gibson (Democratic Services Officer) and S Hayden (Community Development Officer)

VG1 ELECTION OF A CHAIR

RESOLVED to elect Councillor Hargreaves as Chair.

VG2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no apologies for absence.

Councillor Day had been appointed to the Committee by executive decision; this would come into effect later in the week. He therefore attended the meeting without having voting rights.

VG3 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 8 January 2020 were agreed and would be signed as an accurate record at an appropriate point.

VG4 APPLICATIONS BY ORGANISATIONS

Each application was considered in turn. The Chair confirmed that in addition to £330,000 being available for distribution, a further £53,200 had been made available from unspent Community Project Grants and £3,000 from monies not having been spent on the Thaxted Festival, which had not taken place. This meant there was £386,200 available to allocate.

Members resolved to grant funds to organisations, subject to the consideration of all valid applications and the overall budget limit. One further outstanding application remained for discussion at the next meeting. Members agreed to re-visit these initial allocations at the next meeting to be held on Tuesday 23 February 2021 at 12.30.

4a Council for Voluntary Services Uttlesford (CVSU)

Members considered that this organisation had stood up fairly well to date throughout the pandemic.

RESOLVED to grant CVSU Organisation £34,000, subject to the consideration of all valid applications and the overall budget limit.

4b Uttlesford Community Travel

Members noted that £17,000 had previously been granted for vehicle replacement through a Community Project Grant. Officers confirmed that concerns previously expressed around zero hour contracts had now been resolved.

RESOLVED to grant Uttlesford Community Travel £40,000, subject to the consideration of all valid applications and the overall budget limit.

4c St Clare West Essex Hospice Care Trust

Members noted that the pandemic had resulted in a significant drop in fundraised income.

RESOLVED to grant St Clare West Essex Hospice Care Trust £5,000, subject to the consideration of all valid applications and the overall budget limit.

4d Community 360 Training

Members noted that remote training was currently in place and that the requested funding would enable bursary places to be provided for 52 people to receive training.

Members requested that further information be sought in respect of the effects of the pandemic on the organisation.

RESOLVED that the item be deferred and carried forward to the next meeting.

4e Home-Start Essex

Members discussed the fact that the home visiting service had continued to operate well throughout the pandemic.

RESOLVED to grant Home Start Essex £10,500, subject to the consideration of all valid applications and the overall budget limit.

4f Volunteer Uttlesford

Councillor Lodge declared a non-prejudicial interest as his wife had previously worked for the organisation.

Members acknowledged that extra demands had been placed on the organisation during the pandemic.

RESOLVED to grant Volunteer Uttlesford £18,000, subject to the consideration of all valid applications and the overall budget limit.

4g Support 4 Sight

Members expressed support for the application, particularly given that the organisation had experienced difficult times having left the shop.

RESOLVED to grant Support 4 Sight £10,000, subject to the consideration of all valid applications and the overall budget limit.

4h Action for Family Carers

Members noted that Covid costs to the organisation had exceeded £15,600 and that the organisation had proved itself throughout the pandemic.

RESOLVED to grant Action for Family Carers £15,000, subject to the consideration of all valid applications and the overall budget limit.

4i Hearing Help Essex

Members noted that the organisation had incurred significant additional expenditure due to Covid and had shown great initiative during this time, alongside many other organisations.

RESOLVED to grant Hearing Help Essex £3,500, subject to the consideration of all valid applications and the overall budget limit.

4j Uttlesford Citizens Advice

Officers explained that the application was broken down between £155,000 and £5,000 which was a separate invoice for frontline services. Members supported the application and confirmed the excellent on-going service provided by Citizens Advice.

RESOLVED to recommend that Cabinet grant Uttlesford Citizens Advice £160,000, subject to the consideration of all valid applications and the overall budget limit.

4k Citizens Advice East Herts

Members noted the map showing the areas of deprivation in Uttlesford and recognised the support provided by Citizens Advice East Herts to many Uttlesford residents, particularly to those living near to Bishop's Stortford who had utilised the service located there. Extra pressures caused by the pandemic were also recognised and the complexity of cases had also increased.

RESOLVED to grant Citizens Advice East Hertfordshire £11,500, subject to the consideration of all valid applications and the overall budget limit.

4l Accuro (Care Services)

Members acknowledged that this organisation provided a county-wide service and had incurred additional costs of £5,700 because of the pandemic. Members initially supported the officers' recommendation of £15,000 but subsequently re-visited the item and increased that figure.

RESOLVED to grant Accuro (Care Services) £20,000, subject to the consideration of all valid applications and the overall budget limit.

4m Uttlesford Buffy Bus Association - Buffy Playbus

Members recognised that services offered by the organisation since Covid restrictions had been reduced, staff had initially been furloughed but that initiative had been used and that the funding request was supported.

RESOLVED to grant Uttlesford Buffy Bus Association £5,000, subject to the consideration of all valid applications and the overall budget limit.

4n Carers First

Members noted that costs associated with the pandemic were shown as £30,000 and that between April and December 2020 there were 69 new carers. Members recognised that there were many cases where children were looking after parents, as well as schooling siblings.

The application was supported and after initial discussions the matter was revisited.

RESOLVED to grant Carers First £7,381, subject to the consideration of all valid applications and the overall budget limit.

4o Bridge Meadows CIC

Councillor Lodge declared a non-prejudicial interest as the operators were known to him.

Officers clarified that this organisation was a Community Interest Company and applications were only open to registered charities. However, possible alternative funding streams existed, such as Health and Well-being grants.

Members accepted this information and officers agreed to investigate alternative funding streams.

RESOLVED to grant Bridge Meadows CIC nil monies.

4p Dig It Community Allotment

Councillor Lodge declared a non-prejudicial interest as his wife had previously had connections with the organisation but she had had no involvement for the past couple of years.

Members recognised the healthy outdoor nature of the works involved and supported the application.

RESOLVED to grant Dig it Community Allotment £6,000, subject to the consideration of all valid applications and the overall budget limit.

4q Saffron Walden Mencap Society

Members discussed the recommendation made by officers that no grant be given to the organisation. Concerns were expressed that the funding being requested was for a new project, about which there were doubts as to future sustainability. There was also seen to be some overlap with the works undertaken by Accuro (Care Services). It was recognised that possible alternative funding streams existed, such as Health and Well-being grants. Members requested that officers should investigate further possible funding streams.

RESOLVED to grant Saffron Walden Mencap Society nil monies.

Meeting Closed 12.22 pm