

Committee: Voluntary Support Grant Committee

Date: 12
December 2022

Title: Voluntary Organisation Support Grant

Portfolio Holder: Cllr Sutton – Communities

Report Author: Sue Hayden

Key decision:

Summary

1. Each year the district council opens its Voluntary Organisation Support Grant to registered charities who provide vital assistance to the residents of Uttlesford through the Council's corporate objectives. The organisations apply via an on-line application form, as well as supplying a copy of the organisation's most recent audited financial accounts, medium/long term business plan, copies of the organisation's equalities policy, constitution and safeguarding policy.

Recommendations

2. To consider all applications and allocate up to £310,000 grant funding as per the Council's Grants policy.

Financial Implications

3. There is a budget provision of £310,000 for 2023/24 to support organisations, in assisting the council to meet its corporate plan objectives.

Background Papers

4. The following papers were referred to by the author in the preparation of this report and are available for inspection from the author of the report.

Applications received from organisations applying to the Voluntary Organisation Support Grant for 2023/24.

Impact

- 5.

Communication/Consultation	Applications sort from voluntary sector organisations.
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Community Safety	N/A
Equalities	Funding is open to all registered charities
Health and Safety	N/A
Human Rights/Legal Implications	The Council has the powers to award grants to organisations using its general power of competence in section 1 of the Localism Act 2011
Sustainability	N/A
Ward-specific impacts	N/A
Workforce/Workplace	Communities Team

Situation

6. Each organisation was invited to attend an individual virtual meeting with the Committee of the Cabinet, along with officer support, on 14 November 2022 to talk through their application and answer any questions.
7. A formal Committee of the Cabinet meeting will take place on 12 December, along with relevant officer support, to allocate the £310,000. The decisions will then be ratified at a Cabinet meeting, after which time, the organisations will be informed of the outcome.
8. Below sets out details of the use that will be made of any financial aid given by Uttlesford District Council by each organisation and how much money they are requesting for 2023/24.

9. **Accuro**

Any grant provided by Uttlesford District Council will be used to cover revenue funding for the operational project costs, including staff costs and core organisational costs of delivering Accuro's services in Uttlesford.

Any financial aid given by UDC will be restricted to Accuro's services in Uttlesford

- Saturday Play Club – Saffron Walden
- U19s Projects – Saffron Walden and Great Dunmow
- School Holiday project – Uttlesford
- Adult Friendship Scheme – Saffron Walden
- Young adult Friendship scheme – Saffron Walden
- STRIDE – Great Dunmow

- And to launch new services to meet new needs identified e.g. Under 8s

Financial support will enable Accuro to continue to deliver its services, helping make a real difference to the lives of local people with disability making Uttlesford the best place to live, work and play.

Amount requested £20,000

10. Action for Family Carers

Young Carers value

1. Having access to a regular break and
2. Having ongoing contact over time with a dedicated Young Carer support worker.

Action for Family Carers will proactively engage with local families, primary and secondary schools, statutory and local voluntary and community sector agencies to identify children with caring responsibilities and to ensure that their needs are addressed. They will maintain regular contact with schools to ensure there is appropriate, ongoing recognition of and support in place for Young Carers including through working with staff and pupils to raise awareness and provision of one-to-one and group work with identified Young Carers.

Young Carers in Uttlesford will have access to a regular Club where they will mix socially with other Young Carers and participate in a variety of activities ranging from games, arts and crafts through to developing life skills such as cooking. Clubs are for Young Carers aged 8 years and over and take place during the early evening for 2 hours on a fortnightly basis alternating between Stansted and Great Dunmow to ensure that there is a club within reasonable reach for all Young Carers across the district.

Amount requested £17,600

11. Uttlesford Buffy Bus Association Buffy Playbus

The budgeted cost for Buffy Playbus' full operational costs is approximately £94,000 for 2023/24. It is anticipated an increase in salaries, bus running costs which include diesel and insurance and other general costs.

Financial aid from Uttlesford District Council would be employed alongside that

of funding already secured from the National Lottery (Community Fund) and other sources such as Essex Community Foundation, Fowler, Smith and Jones, Tesco plus various Rotary Clubs and individuals such as the Mayor of Dunmow who have chosen to support the Charity during 2023.

The present funding stream from the National Lottery will finish at the end of December 2023 and a further application will be made in May/June 2023 for continuation of their financial support. Indications have been very positive about Buffy Playbus' plan to drop charges for families to access its sessions and they were enthused by the collaboration with Uttlesford Foodbank, therefore it is hoped future funding will continue.

Amount Requested £6,200

12. Uttlesford Citizen Advice

Core generalist and debt advice services funding

Uttlesford Citizen's Advice said UDC funding is paramount to the survival and success of Uttlesford Citizens Advice. Reliable funding from UDC will enable :

- maintain a consistent core advice service
- support the council by preventing or mitigating problems – particularly in connection with housing, benefits and debt issues
- apply for and operate projects (that in turn off-set overheads whilst delivering extra services for residents)
- engage in the community, attend council led partnership meetings and coordinate with statutory and voluntary bodies and legal services

Funds from UDC ensure levels of staffing necessary to manage a large volunteer resource and maintain the high quality of advice.

In addition to staff costs associated with advice provision, administrators and managers are paid to ensure that the service is run in a professional, safe manner. The organisation is audited annually by the national body of Citizens Advice to assess leadership performance in Governance; Strategic Business Planning; Risk Management; Financial Management; People Management; Equality Leadership; Operation Performance Management; Partnership Working and Research and Campaigns. In terms of quality of advice, over the last year the organisation has consistently scored highly in all audit areas covering client outcomes, case administration and reliability of scoring; these assessments show that Uttlesford CA can be confident that they are delivering good advice consistently. Financial and budgetary control and good governance of the Charity is overseen by ten Trustees, all volunteers drawn from the local community.

Funds from UDC ensure a paid training resource. As a volunteer-led organisation, Uttlesford Citizen Advice understand that people use them as a springboard to get into or return to the workplace, however this means that there is an ongoing need to recruit and train new advisers. Over the last year Uttlesford CA have recruited 18 new advisers (12 are currently volunteering) and four student interns, whilst providing ongoing training and development for the existing workforce. It is projected that there is a need to recruit and train more advisers over the next year in order to meet growing demand and pressure on the service, whilst acknowledging that the current economic climate means fewer people are able and willing to give their time for free.

Frontline Funding

Frontline Referrals Ltd. is a non-profit company solely owned and controlled by Uttlesford Citizens Advice. A £5,000 contribution from UDC will be allocated specifically to fund an existing member of staff to continue to focus on expansion whilst also ensuring the platform is utilized fully across Uttlesford. The Trustee board is confident that Frontline has the potential to off-set a significant element of overheads back into UCA over the long-term that will make it less reliant on grant income from UDC in the future.

Amount requested £194,000 plus £5,000 plus VAT for Frontline

13. Uttlesford Community Action Network (Formally CVSU and Volunteer Centre merger)

The use of the grant funding made by UDC would enable the operational strategy to directly support local groups/partners and the communities it operates within, in the areas of pre-existing and emerging needs through the objectives it has laid out for the forthcoming year. UCAN intend to focus upon the specific areas and gaps in provision that the Covid 19 crisis continues to amplify and will continue to do so over the coming years.

Along with a range of emerging issues that this crisis along with others such as the austerity crisis, digital exclusion, increasing social care needs have and will continue to create within the district. It cannot be underestimated the need for the provision and the demands placed upon it, which will only become greater over the coming year, especially during the winter period. UCAN is already seeing people and families reach crisis point which in turn has a knock-on effect of causing other social and health needs that require its support. The sector and the organisation must be financially resilient and future proofed to be able to cope with the additional demands that are and will be made of it moving forward.

UCAN believes that its current provision in the form of existing projects along with the new volunteering expectation, and core functions performed in the sector and community have and will become more vital than ever before, but at the same time recognising it needs to deliver more with less.

Amount requested £80,000

14. **Dig-it Community Allotment**

A collaboration has been established between three local organisations to deliver a new community-based initiative. The Enterprise East Group CIC (EEG), proprietors of Café Cornell, have joined forces with Dig It Community Allotment (DIC) and Saffron Walden Mencap Society (SWMS) to launch 'Plot to Plate'. Dig It currently host four sessions per week with participants from EEG, SWMS and the wider community on a weekly basis at its local allotment throughout the course of the year to learn how to plant, tend, harvest and maintain the fruit and vegetable plots across all four seasons. Once the produce is ready, it is brought to the café where the chefs will teach participants how to wash, prepare and cook a tasty nutritious and immune boosting meal, from the fruits of their labours.

In addition to this, Dig-It has identified a second plot that is ready to welcome groups and offers a more central location and secure setting for vulnerable groups. Saffron Walden Quakers are keen for Dig It to utilise the site however funding is needed to staff and deliver sessions. The organisation has also explored community spaces with Café Cornell that could provide additional growing capacity which offers the opportunity to increase produce.

Due to reduced funding allocated last year, Dig It were unable to launch its after work session which they identified a strong need for. There has been much interest in this from the local community, who work, to run an afterwork/weekend session. This noted by many as much needed following extensive time in lockdown and burn out due to increased screen time for many. Next year it is aimed to deliver an out of work hours session specifically for this group. Currently sessions are run in the mornings and early afternoon, therefore an evening and potentially a weekend session would have strong attendance and there is a clear need in the community. Enquiries from individuals who have Dementia has also become apparent and is an area Dig-it is eager to explore in collaboration with Saffron Hall and local carers.

Amount requested £6,000

15. **Citizens Advice East Herts**

Historically, Uttlesford District Council has recognised that some Uttlesford residents choose to seek advice at in Bishop's Stortford and is financially supportive of the advice that is given to them.

Despite moving to providing the majority of clients advice by phone and digital for those whose problems can be helped in this way, it is recognised that there are a significant minority who will still need face to face advice. Additionally, 1 in 10 clients require on going casework.

The annual cost of running the advice service across East Herts is around £280,000 comprising of salaries, volunteers, and premises costs. Funding from Uttlesford District Council will allow the organisation to continue to not only advise Uttlesford residents by phone and email but also to advise them face to face and offer ongoing casework where their case requires it. It will also contribute to its community and partner engagement work including Contact Centres in community spaces and Community Access Points (including public access computers and free phones) in partner buildings as well as helping to continue Frontline.

Around 6.75% of Citizens Advice East Herts clients who give a postcode live in Uttlesford. Uttlesford Client numbers have risen 8% April – September 2022 compared to the same period last year. This means that many residents choose to get advice from them, despite being over the border in Hertfordshire. Without UDC funding Citizens Advice East Herts would be unable to continue to provide advice and importantly ongoing casework to Uttlesford residents

Amount requested £11,500

16. **Hearing Help**

Hearing Help currently deliver support across four venues in the District - Great Dunmow, Thaxted, Saffron Walden and Stansted. Sessions are also run in neighbouring towns such as Braintree and Finchingfield, and Uttlesford residents are welcome to attend these. The organisation also delivers home visits to provide support, and also goes into care homes in local areas.

The grant requested will contribute towards the costs of sustaining this valuable Hearing Aid Support Service (HASS) - delivery costs, core rent, salaries and running costs. The sessions used to be drop-in and required very little administration in advance; the organisation now must run a formal registration and booking process to ensure that its Service Users have plenty of time to spend with the Volunteers, so that they can benefit from peer-to-peer support, and also to ensure that the venues do not become too crowded.

The total project cost is £12,000 - the remaining funding has been secured as a percentage of larger grants from Essex County Council, and Essex Community Foundation, and also from Hearing-Help's own fundraising income.

This grant will be spent on:

Promotion of services and volunteering opportunities
Training and Vetting x 3 new Volunteers
Provision of Volunteer Kit Boxes and uniforms
Volunteer Travel Expenses
Contribution to administration of service
Contribution to premises hire and insurance

Amount requested £5,000

17. **Home-Start Essex**

Home-Start Essex are seeking financial aid to continue the delivery of their unique Home Visiting service in Uttlesford. The financial aid requested would fund 1:1 home visiting support for 11 families within a 12-month period. Home-Start Essex delivers a range of individually tailored support services to meet the emotional and practical needs of families of approximately 50 families per annum in the Uttlesford district. In the Uttlesford district during the year 1st April 2021- March 31st, 2022, they supported 25 families through its home-visiting service, 22 families through their weekly family groups, 15 families through its wellbeing programmes, and 27 families through family activity days.

During support, the volunteer and coordinator, aim to build the family's confidence, enabling them to access and navigate external services and create a support network to assist them once HSE support finishes. The volunteer builds a trusting and helping relationship with the family, allowing the family to be receptive to support and guidance. This enables them to change existing practices/behaviours and enhance their enjoyment of family life. In a recent survey, 97% of families supported by a Home Visiting Volunteer felt that they were getting on well with their volunteer after 6 weekly visits.

Amount requested £12,913

18. **Saffron Hall Trust**

Saffron Hall Trust are seeking funding to deliver a participatory arts programme in Uttlesford, with the objectives of

- Working in partnership with other local third sector organisations to use arts-based activity to support them to better reach and impact their target service users.
- Uniting people from across the Uttlesford area, creating new, intergenerational connections.
- Positively impacting participants mental health and general wellbeing.
- Support participants to develop and utilise creative and artistic skills, to explore issues of importance to them and the community.
- Producing high-quality collaborative artistic outcomes which are shared more widely across the community.

This proposal builds on the 'Come Together' project which has been supported by UDC in previous years. As outlined in Saffron Hall Trusts recent monitoring report, the model was tested by a series of workshops, culminating in a weeklong residency in Saffron Walden town centre. The workshop programme featured standalone taster sessions around songwriting, poetry/ creative writing, creative composition and visual arts. Many of the outcomes of the workshops fed into the final residency which also featured a community art installation, a poetry evening, a dementia friendly afternoon and a creative networking session as well as drop in activity and 'pop up' performances from local musicians. The project engaged a wide variety of local partners including Enterprise East, Saffron Community Shed, Saffron Walden Museum and others.

The funding request is to enable the organisation to build on this work and to deliver an iteration of the Come Together programme elsewhere in Uttlesford, taking elements of their tried and tested approach to another part of the district, in partnership with other local organisations.

Amount requested £5,700

19. St Clare Hospice

The grant given in 2022/23 supported the first-year development costs of a new hospice Hub in Saffron Walden, specifically to support the needs of residents in the rural north of St Clare Hospice catchment area, who struggle to access the main hospice site in Harlow or to get the care they need from elsewhere.

During this first year, the hub offered psycho-social support and practical advice and guidance for people with a terminal diagnosis and their families and was open on a drop-in basis once a month.

This takes place in The Salvation Army Hall, which accommodates an existing bereavement café, social worker and counsellor. St Clare Hospice are in the process of sourcing additional space to accommodate new, scheduled clinical and therapy appointments in a central location in the town.

In addition, the organisation will run a 'Café Clare' at the hub, which will provide an opportunity for patients and families to gain peer support from others who are experiencing the same challenges.

The new Hub will extend to open twice monthly (1st and 3rd Thursdays of the month) and will be expert led, supported by 3-4 locally based, trained hospice volunteers. Services will include:

- Holistic needs assessment & review appointments with a Clinical Nurse Specialist
- Symptom control appointments with a Nurse Consultant
- Acupuncture clinic appointments with dedicated therapist
- Education events & workshops: developed to address common challenges faced by people with life limiting conditions, e.g., 'Planning for future care needs'
- Emotional & psychosocial support including 1:1 counselling
- Advice, information and guidance covering housing, benefits, debt, navigating the social care system, employment, wills, LPA and funeral planning. (This is not an exhaustive list).
- Bereavement support for families
- Opportunities for other local community groups to share their services where appropriate, (Citizens Advice, Carers First and Social Prescribers.)

Amount requested £5,000

20. **Support 4 Sight**

The financial aid will fund a range of services for people with sight loss in Uttlesford during 2023/24.

Since fully re-opening after Covid lockdowns, Support 4 Sight have been working to a community-based model, offering services and activities at different locations across the district combined with home visits.

Led by an Outreach Worker, they will continue to run monthly coffee mornings and 'roaming resource centre' at the Bowls Club and at Community Link in Saffron Walden, and at Banks Court in Dunmow. Growing partnerships with centres across the district, they are setting up further regular monthly slots for equipment demonstrations at Cornell Court and Takeley Community Hub.

The roaming resource centre gives people the opportunity to look at a range of low vision aids and equipment, receive information, advice, guidance and signposting, and book 1:1 appointments for specific equipment demonstrations/consultations while being in a social environment that offers peer support, entertainment, and a cuppa. The coffee mornings therefore offer an informal, accessible and flexible way to access support.

Support 4 Sight will also roll out new tech groups in Saffron Walden, run by

their IT Officer. Small groups meet over a number of weeks to build the participants digital skills and confidence, especially in using assistive technology. This is currently piloting elsewhere and this new offer is ready to roll-out in Uttlesford.

Support 4 Sight will continue to

- carry out home visits to those who are unable to attend their pop-ups or there are concerns about their mental health or home environment
- provide the Uttlesford Talking News
- organise at least one Low Vision Exhibition, based on one they ran in Summer 2022 with 7 exhibitors and over 50 attendees
- weekly Low Vision Clinic at Princess Alexandra Hospital to offer assistance to Uttlesford patients. Referrals are made by ophthalmologists and GPs. Their trained ECLO offers emotional support at the point of diagnosis to eye clinic patients, with ongoing support then provided in the community.
- telephone advice, information, signposting and befriending service
- provide volunteering opportunities, training and support to local residents (including those with lived experience)

The financial aid will help fund:

1. the Outreach Worker
2. the Tech Officer
3. the Volunteer *Co-ordinator*
4. venue hire for the coffee mornings
5. volunteer and staff travel and other expenses

Amount requested £15,800

21. **CraftAbility - Thaxted Disabled Centre**

The Centre hires specially adapted minibuses & trained drivers from Uttlesford Community Travel to transport disabled members to & from the Centre for sessions twice a week on Mondays & Thursdays. Over half of the Centre's annual costs are spent on providing this transport. If funding to cover the cost of providing the necessary transport to the Centre for their disabled members was not available they would not be able to attend the Centre & the Centre would no longer be able to function.

This specialised transport costs around £1,500 per month and a grant of £3,000 from Uttlesford District Council would cover this cost for 2 months.

Amount requested £3,000

22. Uttlesford Community Travel

Uttlesford Community Travel said that the grant from Uttlesford District Council is a vital part of their income which contributes to the cost of providing a much needed service to the residents of Uttlesford, which is increasing due to population growth due to new developments, with more members moving into the 80-100+ age category.

The grant also helps with the extension to week day service hours, weekend hours and supporting local club events during the evenings. including the vaccination programmes.

Uttlesford Community Travel aim is to replace one vehicle every year using the replacement grant. Currently all vehicles comply with the latest EURO 6 emissions. UCT's long term vision is to set a Net Zero Carbon goal and project electric vehicles.

With the increased demand on the service, and the increase in travelled mileage, it is important the vehicle replacement remains to avoid safety concerns, high maintenance charges and reliability issues preventing UCT delivering its current level of service.

Amount requested £48,300 plus replacement vehicle project £17,000* from different grant pot.

Risk Analysis

23.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
Allocation of grants does not secure their implementation	2 The organisations are well established and have a strong partnership	4	The grants will be subject to grant conditions in accordance with the Grants Policy.

1 = Little or no risk or impact

2 = Some risk or impact – action may be necessary.

3 = Significant risk or impact – action required

4 = Near certainty of risk occurring, catastrophic effect or failure of project.