

# SCRUTINY COMMISSION – 13TH SEPTEMBER 2021

## Report of the Head of Neighbourhood Services

### ITEM 7 CHARNWOOD COMMUNITY GRANTS

#### **Purpose of Report**

To provide an overview and summary of the Charnwood Community Grants schemes and to include detail on successful applications and support given to voluntary and community sector organisations.

#### **Action Requested**

That Scrutiny Commission note the contents of the report and the information provided.

#### **Background**

##### Charnwood Community Grants Schemes and Criteria

Cabinet at its meeting on the 17th December 2015 approved the revision of the Grants Criteria, to reflect the new Corporate Plan for 2016-2020. The application forms were revised against the Corporate Plan objectives and used for all future applications until 2020/21.

In February 2017 a report went to Policy Scrutiny to review the outline assessment criteria for Charnwood Grants. The report provided the information about the different types of grants that were available, what the criteria for them were and where people could find that information. Information on how those who were unsuccessful were supported to help find alternative funding or improve future applications was also discussed. Policy Scrutiny approved the report which can be found along with the minutes of this meeting on this link:

[https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/committees/policy\\_scrutiny\\_group?paper\\_q=&paper\\_classification=&paper\\_startDate=2017-02-07&go=Search](https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/committees/policy_scrutiny_group?paper_q=&paper_classification=&paper_startDate=2017-02-07&go=Search)

On 12<sup>th</sup> April 2018 Cabinet approved the establishment of the Member Grants scheme for Charnwood to support the local voluntary and community sector. The proposal was approved, and Member Grants went live in June 2018 with each Councillor allocated £1000. The report and minutes of this meeting can be found on this link:

[https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/committees/cabinet?paper\\_q=&paper\\_classification=&paper\\_startDate=2018-04-12&go=Search](https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/committees/cabinet?paper_q=&paper_classification=&paper_startDate=2018-04-12&go=Search)

##### Charnwood VCS Covid-19 Recovery Grants 2020/21

In response to Covid-19, Cabinet at its meeting on the 9 July 2020 approved the amalgamation of the Charnwood Community Development & Engagement (including environmental) and the Loughborough Community Grant Schemes in 2020/21 into a single grants scheme renamed Charnwood VCS COVID-19 Recovery Grants, in order

to respond to the needs of the voluntary and community sector as they responded and recovered from the pandemic. In addition, it was agreed that £26,000 of the Members Grants was reallocated to support the Charnwood Community Action Hub response to the pandemic. Resulting in Member Grants being £500 per Councillor in 2020/21. Cabinet also approved the grants criteria; the application form and the associated guidance note. Further details can be found at:

<https://charnwood.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=137&MId=301>

In total £117,868 was allocated to 39 organisations from the borough. Details of those grants awarded can be found at Appendix A.

### Revised Charnwood Community Grants Schemes 2021/22

At its meeting on 11 March 2021 Cabinet approved the proposals for the revision of the Charnwood Community Grants, Community Facilities, Sports and Member Grants schemes. Following the 2021/22 budgets being agreed at Cabinet on 11th February 2021, the grants scheme was reviewed, and changes made, resulting in the new combined grants scheme called Charnwood Community Grants, changes to the Community Facilities Grant scheme were made including the inclusion of certain sports related projects. These revisions came into effect for round 1 of the 2021/22 grants scheme. Details of those grants awarded at Cabinet on the 9<sup>th</sup> July in Round 1 can be found at Appendix A.

Approval was also given to change the allocated grant to each Elected Member from £1000 to £500.

The associated report and minutes of the 11 March Cabinet meeting can be found at the below link which includes the revised application forms and guidance notes:

<https://charnwood.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=137&MId=551>

The following link takes you to the Grants page of the Council's website where all the application forms and Guidance Criteria can be found.

<http://www.charnwood.gov.uk/pages/charnwoodgrants>

The following is a summary of all the current Charnwood Grants and the amounts available for 2021/2022

Grant	Amount 2021/22
Charnwood Facilities Grant	Opening rolling balance £150,300 - after Round 1 £130,300
Community Grants	£50,000 – after Round 1 £20,600
Members Grant	£26,000 (£500 per Councillor)

All Community Grant information including the organisations that have been awarded grants is available on the Charnwood Borough Council Website :

<https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/pages/charnwoodgrants>

## **Voluntary & Community Sector (VCS) Development Officer Support**

At its meeting on 5th January 2015 the Budget Scrutiny Panel supported the proposal to fund a 12 month Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) Development Officer post through both the Loughborough Special Rate and the General Fund. At its meeting on the 25<sup>th</sup> November 2015 it was recommended to Cabinet that the post should continue to be funded and on the 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2017 it was agreed the post would be funded on an ongoing basis.

[https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/files/papers/bsp\\_03\\_january\\_2017\\_item\\_07\\_supplementary\\_information\\_vcs\\_development\\_officer/BSP%2003%20January%202017%20Item%2007%20Supplementary%20Information%20VCS%20Development%20Officer.pdf](https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/files/papers/bsp_03_january_2017_item_07_supplementary_information_vcs_development_officer/BSP%2003%20January%202017%20Item%2007%20Supplementary%20Information%20VCS%20Development%20Officer.pdf)

The VCS Development Officers continue to provide support in a variety of ways :

- to VCS groups including an initial 'health check' to identify any areas of need or development (see Organisational Support details below)
- with specific focus given to supporting identified Strategic Partners through the next application round and then ongoing through their business and sustainability planning.
- with support to organisations who apply for Charnwood Grants including additional support for external funding applications
- with suggestions for funding sources and a guidance resource on ensuring that organisations maximise the potential of their applications.
- by attending all Charnwood Grants Panels in an advisory capacity
- Delivering workshop/networking events with specific areas of focus including successful applications, monitoring and evaluation and trustee development

During the Pandemic the VCS Development Officers supported the Covid 19 Recovery Grants programme in response to meeting the needs of the local voluntary and community sector to recover from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic for the period up to 31 March 2021. In addition to a press release being published, the programme was promoted on Facebook and via the Communities & Partnerships mailing list. A total of £117,625.88 was awarded to 39 organisations. 75% of applications received were from organisations who had consulted with the VCS Development Officers before submitting their application. In addition, all the applications were reviewed to ensure enough information was available to panel members for scoring. Unsuccessful applicants were contacted to discuss other funding opportunities and support with applications if required.

The new Charnwood Community grants and the Community Facilities grant programmes were launched on 6<sup>th</sup> April 2021. The VCS Development Officers continue to provide a wide range of support to ensure that the applicants can complete their application forms and enable them to meet the criteria. In addition to a press release being published, the programmes were promoted on Facebook and via the Communities & Partnerships mailing list. The Facebook post reached over 8000 people and had 38 shares.

As part of the launch, grant surgeries were offered to potential applicants and took place with 25 organisations. 10 organisations were supported with their applications for round one.

Leicestershire Youth Sailing Association was one of the organisations supported in the Round 1 and were awarded both a facilities grant and a community grant. *“I would like to comment on the excellent help and support that our organisation has had over many years from the VCS development officers.... Over the last 3 years we have transformed our sailing centre facilities... from a few old sheds and a portable toilet, to a proper building with running water electricity showers and toilets. It has been a struggle, but without the support ... I doubt that we would have reached this point.....”*  
Jill Magee

Organisations that were unsuccessful have been contacted by the VCS Development officers to arrange a follow up. Where possible, they have been signposted to other sources of funding. Support is available to those applicants who were unable to secure all the funding from our programme to identify alternative sources of funding and support with writing applications.

The VCS Development officers have worked to establish positive relationships with external funders including The National Lottery, Leicestershire & Rutland Community Foundation and Shire Grants. During the challenging times of 2020/21, this partnership working helped to support many organisations to successfully secure additional funding to sustain their organisations and their service delivery. In 2021/22 this support continues, £60,350 of external funding has been secured for organisations in the first Quarter of this year.

An example of this is Albert Street Artists who were awarded a partial grant through Round 1 of the Charnwood Community grants programme. Due the groups limited capacity, the VCS Development officer took the lead in liaising with the Shire grants officers and a subsequent application resulted in £5000 being awarded to the organisation. *“All of us are delighted with your dedication and support to the Group ... and the input you have given us to stop closure of Albert Street Artists...yours Paul Dexter”.*

### **Charnwood Community and Facilities Grants**

All grants have a set of guidance notes that provide the applicants with all the information they require to complete the form. A copy of the guidance notes can be found at : [https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/pages/grants\\_guidance\\_notes](https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/pages/grants_guidance_notes)

- The guidance notes inform the applicants of how to complete the form in order to ensure they provide as much relevant detail as possible
- Once submitted the grants team will check the applications and follow up on any additional information required ensuring that as much detail is provided to give the application the best chance.

In addition, they can

- contact the Grants Team for further support,
- attend the grant surgeries
- submit application for a pre-read (if provided in a timely fashion)

## **What makes a Good Application?**

Successful applications :

- organisationally meet the eligibility criteria set out and that the activity/project/service benefits the residents in Charnwood
- provide detailed information about the activity/project/service including how they will measure expected out comes
- provide evidence of any potential joint working opportunities
- evidence the community need and support for this activity/project/service eg; consultation, review of similar activities
- evidence inclusivity to wider community when relevant
- provide detailed costings of the project including any additional funding to ensure the activity/project/service can be delivered

Unsuccessful applications :

- don't meet the organisational eligibility criteria eg are not constituted, no bank account
- cannot demonstrate the significant need for the proposed activity/project/service
- can't demonstrate community benefit
- provide costings that are considered inflated/expensive or unrealistic
- cannot show how any additional funding required will be secured to ensure delivery

As can be seen from the information provided, the majority of applications received are successful for some level of grant award. On the whole, this is due to the pre work undertaken by the VCS Development Officers and the wider grants team. As outlined, if an application is unsuccessful, this is followed up by the VCS Development Officers who provide support to look at other funding options if possible.

## Report Implications

The following implications have been identified for this report:

### *Financial Implications*

None.

### *Risk Management*

No risks have been identified in connection with this report.

Background Papers: None

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## APPENDIX A

### Grants Awarded 2020/21 VCS Covid-19 Recovery Grants and 2021/22 Community Grants and Community Facilities Grants

A list of the applications awarded in 2020/21 as part of the VCS Covid-19 Recovery Grants and to date in 2021/22 as part of the Charnwood Community Grants and the Community Facilities Grants can be found below.

Further information is provided for each grant scheme and the number of applications received, awarded and the number of new organisations submitting grant applications.

The Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) Development Officer is providing guidance to the groups and organisations to help improve the standard of applications and increase the number of successful applications. As a result of this support there has been an increase in successful grant awards including a significant number of first time applicants.

#### 2020/21 – VCS Covid-19 Recovery Grants Summary

A total of 42 applications were received in of which 39 were awarded grants. Of the 42 applications, 3 were declined due to not meeting the eligibility criteria. Of the 25 applications, 11 of the organisations were new to applying for a grant

Applicant	Project description	Amount applied for (£)	Amount awarded (£)
Twenty Twenty	Love4Life Charnwood	5,000	5,000
Glenmore Centre	Glenmore Re-opening Project	3,856	3,856
SMART Inclusive SEN	Roll-out Phase 1	5,000	0
Polish Community Centre	Re-activation of community centre	4,930	4,930
Dialysis Freedom CIC	Swap scheme	5,000	0
Haddon Way Residents Association	Re-engagement post-lockdown	1,480	1,000
Steps Conductive Education Centre	Steps online	5,000	1,000
Falcon Support Services	Recovery week	1,339	1,332
Grange Park Centre	The Arc re-opening	3,525	3,525
Mountsorrel Methodist Church	Covid-19 Recovery	3,650	2,500
Age UK	Men and Women in Sheds	5,000	1,500
Walton Village Hall	Covid-19 Recovery	850	850
Newtown Linford Village Hall	Project re-opening	2,925	2,700

Ulverscroft Camera Club	Covid-19 Recovery	445	445
Citizens Advice Charnwood	Face to face Recovery	3,339	3,339
Barrow upon Soar Community Library	Reopening Project	3,280	2,700
Wymeswold Memorial Hall	Recovery due to closure	3,500	3,300
Anand Mangal	Session's re-start	600	600
Leslie Edwards Trust	Lipreading classes	2,140	1,200
MTC	Reopening Project	2,465	2,465
ARECA	Reopening The Hut	3,645	3,645
Proactive Community Endeavours	PACE Community Hub	5,000	5,000
Loughborough Wellbeing Project	Wellbeing Café	5,000	5,000
Equality Action	Moving from Lockdown	3,000	3,000
Peter Le Marchant Trust	Back to the waterway	5,000	5,000
Age Concern Syston	Age Concern	5,000	4,000
Shepshed Toy Library	Covid Secure	5,000	4,000
New Life Community Church	Loughborough Foodbank and CAP Debt Centre	5,000	4,500
John Storer Charnwood	JSC Recovery Plan	3,907	3,907
Fearon Hall	Covid secure cleaning	3,309	3,309
Albert Street Artists	Reopening Safely	4,596	4,596
Charnwood Drawing and Painting Club	Sustainability Programme	4,950	3,750
Passion	Passion Youth	3,775	3,775
The Baldwin Trust	Putting Safety First	5,000	5,000
African Caribbean Club	Covid Recovery	3,398	250
Three Close Tenants Community Group	Covid Recovery	1,600	1,000
Syston and District Volunteer Centre	Post Covid Recovery	5,000	4,500
Ambient Support	Sensory Garden	5,000	0
Friends of Outwoods Edge School	Post Covid Communication and PPE	2,272	400
Little Bird SOS	Revive Live	4,979	4,500
Shree Ram Krishna Community Project	Covid-19 Support	4,863	4,500
Warwick Way Action Group	Covid-19 Recovery	2,414	1,750
<b>Totals:</b>		<b>£155,032</b>	<b>£117,624</b>

## Community Facilities Grant Applications Round 1 2021/22

A total of 3 applications were received of which 2 were awarded a grant and 1 was declined.

Applicant	Project description	Amount applied for (£)	Amount awarded (£)
Soar Valley Bowls Club	Heating, low-energy lighting and refurbishment of toilets	20,000	10,000
Leicestershire and Rutland Youth Sailing Association	Refurbishment costs, disabled access	10,377	10,000
Yogi Divine Society UK	Refurbishment of Thurmaston Old School Community Centre	20,000	0
<b>Total:</b>		<b>50,377</b>	<b>20,000</b>

## Community Grants Applications Summary Round 1 2021/22

A total of 17 applications were received of which 13 were awarded a grant and 4 declined.

Applicant	Project description	Amount applied for (£)	Amount awarded (£)
Sileby District Guiding	Play / Sports Equipment	500	500
The Baldwin Trust	Recruiting and training new volunteers	5,000	750
Rectory Wildlife Gardeners	Accessible seating	4,660	1,400
New Life Community Church	Family Support worker	3,960	3,900
Peter Le Marchant Trust	Mental Health & Well-being project	5,000	1,200
Albert Street Artists	General running costs	4,470	£1,200
Leicestershire Youth Sailing Association	Volunteer training courses / qualifications and equipment	4,355	2,500
PACE	PACE Camp	5,000	2,000
PCM Loughborough (Polish Community Centre)	Healthy Body, Healthy Mind Project	5,000	4,000

Quetzal	Counselling for survivors of childhood sexual abuse	4,598	1,750
FC Seagrave	Coaching qualifications and football goals	3,415	2,700
Go-Getta CIC	Loughborough Youth Motivators	5,000	5,000
Barkby United Cricket Club	New furniture / oven for club house	4,378	2,500
Steps Conductive Education Centre	Installation of new heating system	1,500	0
Outwoods Edge Primary School PTA	Bike shelter and outdoor play equipment	3,250	0
Above and Beyond	Phoenix Youth Group	5,000	0
Thurmaston DPC FC	Start-up costs for Ladies' Football Team	4,550	0
	<b>Total:</b>	<b>£69,636</b>	<b>29,400</b>

## Members Grants

In 2020/21 each Councillor had £500 to award to an organisation/project/service that worked directly in their wards. All Councillors were offered training on the process and eligibility criteria. The criteria ensures that the applicant receives support for their application prior to it being formally submitted. In 2020/21 67 organisations received funding from their Ward Councillors through the Members Grant scheme.

In 2021/22 five Member grants have been awarded to date.

Awarded Member Grants can be found at :

[https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/files/documents/member\\_grants\\_2020\\_21\\_amount\\_awarded\\_by\\_councillor/Member%20Grants%202020-21%20-%20Awarded%20by%20Councillor%20%28April%202021%29.pdf](https://www.charnwood.gov.uk/files/documents/member_grants_2020_21_amount_awarded_by_councillor/Member%20Grants%202020-21%20-%20Awarded%20by%20Councillor%20%28April%202021%29.pdf)