

# TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

## SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

16 March 2004

### Report of the Grants Review Group

#### Part 1- Public

#### **1 REVIEW OF GRANTS TO PARISH COUNCILS AND VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS - RECOMMENDATIONS OF REVIEW GROUP**

**To consider the recommendations from the Grants Review Group on proposed changes to grants to Parish Councils and Voluntary Organisations and to make recommendations to Cabinet on the review.**

#### **1.1 Background to the Review**

1.1.1 The Scrutiny review of grants to Parish Councils and Voluntary Groups was scoped at a meeting of this Committee in September 2003. It was agreed that a review group be established to consider the following key issues:

- 1) Whether it is appropriate for the Council to award any grants to Parish Councils and voluntary organisations.
- 2) Whether the procedures for applying for and awarding grants could be improved and streamlined.
- 3) Whether the current range of grants could be more focussed on positive community outcomes.
- 4) Whether there is scope for adjusting the criteria on which grants are awarded to provide greater flexibility.
- 5) Whether best practice elsewhere indicates a basis for adjusting our procedures and approach.
- 6) How grant assistance could be aligned more closely with community and Borough Council priorities.
- 7) Whether the current level of grant assistance provided is appropriate to local need.
- 8) Whether there is a need to adjust grant regimes to avoid growing dependency on public sector funding amongst recipients

- 9) Whether there is a need to monitor more formally the outcomes arising from the provision of grant assistance.

1.1.2 The Review Group, under the chairmanship of Cllr Paul Hickmott, has met on two occasions and has now agreed a set of recommendations for change. The review process has involved an initial meeting of the Group to gather information and views. This involved hearing evidence from a number external contributors as follows:

- Caroline Shaw, Chief Executive of the West Kent Council for Voluntary Services
- Lesley Bowls, Community Development Manager, Sevenoaks District Council
- Alan Nicholl (Tonbridge Sports Association) and Peter Robinson (Addington Recreation Ground/Cricket Development).

1.1.3 A second meeting was then held to discuss possible changes to the 5 grant regimes included in the review. Presented below are separate sections dealing with each grant, outlining the nature of the grant, the scope of the review, issues arising from consultation, options for change and recommendations from the Review Group.

1.1.4 Members of Scrutiny Committee are invited to consider the proposed changes for each grant and to endorse the recommendations of the Review Group for further consideration by the Cabinet.

## **12 Revenue Grants to Voluntary Organisations**

### **(a) Background to the Grant Regime**

1.2.1 The Council provides annual grants of up to £3,000 to local voluntary organisations guided by criteria originally adopted in November 2001. In 2003, the Cabinet awarded 66 grants. The proposed budget for such grants for 04/05 totals £48,000. The grant awards made for 2001, 2002, and 2003 are listed at Annex 1.

### **(b) Scope of the Review**

1.2.2 The review has assessed whether the justification for continuing to award such grants remains valid. The administration of the grants system and the need for Cabinet to make decisions on grants, often of very low individual value, also was a matter for review. Grants have in the past been awarded on the basis of annual bids but the tendency has been to seek to spread the benefit of such awards across a large number of organisations. The review has assessed the need to focus funding more. In general terms, the budget has been mainly allocated to local groups who have applied in previous years leaving little scope

for bids from new organisations to be considered for funding. The review has therefore addressed the need to give an equal chance for new bids to be assessed along side those from previous years. Much of the funding awarded to organisations has been in recognition of an organisation's continuing role in providing their particular service or community benefit. This may have led to a growing dependency on Council grant to support the core costs of the organisation. The opportunity has therefore been taken to evaluate ways in which grant support could be used more proactively, to encourage innovation and to seek, where appropriate, a closer alignment between the activities of those groups and the Borough Council's own key priorities.

### (c) Issues Arising from Consultation

1.2.3 Development of the West Kent Compact, a framework agreement between the voluntary, community and public sectors involved consultation with voluntary groups. The following issues were drawn out as relevant to the review of grant assistance:

- for some organisations, more sustainable funding was required, preferably longer term funding over 3 years enabling organisations to plan further ahead
- more consistency in approach across the three West Kent Districts was desirable in terms of the grant procedures
- More feedback should be given when applications are unsuccessful
- Requirements for monitoring and evaluation following the award of a grant should be proportional to the grant awarded.

1.2.4 The review group also heard evidence from Sevenoaks District Council on their own approach to grant assistance to local voluntary groups. In summary, their approach was to divide grant applications into two tranches with the smaller claims having to satisfy a less rigorous application process than the larger ones. Sevenoaks also endeavour to ensure that the organisations receiving grants are providing benefits in line with the Council's own objectives. In assessing levels of grant aid and selecting between competing bids, Sevenoaks has drawn up a points system based on such factors as alignment with Council objectives, numbers benefiting, nature of the benefit, etc.

### (c) Options for Change

1.2.5 A preliminary point to bear in mind when considering improvements to the current system is that, in general, a number of organisations that were consulted in the exercise described above preferred Tonbridge and Malling's present system to those operated by other Councils. The Council should, however, adopt a more rational and structured approach to grant allocation even though this may prove less popular with some past grant recipients.

1.2.6 In order to achieve this, whilst retaining some degree of the simplicity that is valued by local organisations, a two tier approach, similar to that now used by Sevenoaks District Council, is recommended for adoption. Under this option, grant requests for up to £500 should be limited to local rather than national groups and subject to a lesser “test” and a less arduous application process than those of £500 - £3000, which should be retained as the upper limit. The smaller grant requests would have to satisfy one basic test, that their activity contributed in some tangible way to the Council’s exercise of its “well-being” power – “every local authority has the power to do anything which they consider likely to achieve any one or more of the following objectives –

- the promotion or improvement of the economic well-being of their area;
- the promotion or improvement of the social well-being of their area; and
- the promotion or improvement of the environmental well-being of their area”.

1.2.7 Through this criterion, the Council could be satisfied that the award of a grant was a reasonable exercise of its powers and that it would continue to contribute usefully to small scale good work throughout the Borough. These smaller grants should be particularly targeted at very local organisations, whereas those larger grants covered in the succeeding section could be open to applications from larger scale, or regional/national bodies.

1.2.8 For higher level grants, applications should be mainly limited to those that provide for a tangible project, piece of equipment or are undertaking significant on-going work that contributes to the Council's aims. Applications would need to demonstrate how the project, etc. would contribute to the Council’s achievement of its own and/or the Community Strategy’s objectives and priorities. Projects that related to key Council priorities would be particularly likely to attract assistance while those that were connected to less important priorities might have less likelihood of success. For these higher level grants, there would be a monitoring system so that periodically through the year, the organisation would be requested to report progress on the project that was being supported by the Council.

1.2.9 On the assumption that the current system of grant aiding voluntary organisations does need to improve, but that the system should be retained in-house and not be out-sourced to an external agency which would significantly reduce Council control, nor to significantly increase the in-house resource attached to the function, the two tier approach outlined above is worthy of serious consideration.

1.2.10 Four further options for improvement have been identified. Firstly, this more rational approach would mean that applications from organisations that had not previously benefited from grant aid could be considered. More publicity to the scheme through appropriate channels and involving the Parish Councils, would

assist this. Secondly, to maintain the momentum of our commitment to new technology, the grant application form should be included on the voluntary sector page on the Council's web site. Thirdly, to give this process proper attention, it would be more appropriate to place management of the grants system in the remit of the officer whose role is to engage with and promote the voluntary sector. This officer is closely connected to the West Kent Compact mentioned above, is expected to have good knowledge of many of the "main players" in the voluntary sector and thus will have established the right relationships to operate the proposed new system. Fourthly, if consideration is given to delegated decision making by Cabinet portfolio holders, decisions on the lower levels of grants up to £500 should be delegated to the Portfolio Holder for Community Development subject to prior consultation with the relevant Advisory Board. This would represent further efficiency in Cabinet decision making requirements. For this to work effectively, it would be appropriate to divide the current budget into two clear tranches. The budget set aside for smaller levels of grant could then be subject to delegated decision making. The sum of these two budgets should be no more than the current budget, but their relative size will require further consideration to ensure an appropriate balance is struck between the funding made available for the smaller support grants compared with that for larger grants for specific projects.

#### (d) Recommendations

1.2.11 The Review Group therefore recommends that:

- (i) a two tier scheme of grants to voluntary organisations as set out above be developed;
- (ii) such a system should involve splitting the current budget into two tranches: one for smaller support grants of up to £500 for local organisations; the other to support either specific projects put forward by voluntary bodies or significant on-going work related to the Council's aims that, if delivering tangible benefits, could achieve grant support in excess of £500.
- (iii) accordingly a revised set of criteria for the determination of grants should be drawn up and further consideration be given to an appropriate split in the budget for 2005/6.
- (iv) the scheme should be open to all voluntary organisations with an emphasis on support for groups either based in the Borough or providing a local service;
- (v) there should be appropriate publicity about the scheme to include the involvement of Parish Councils;
- (vi) bids for grant aid should be facilitated through the Council's web site;

- (vii) the scheme should be administered by the Corporate Services Manager within the Chief Executive's Service
- (viii) the issue of delegated decision making on lower level grants to an appropriate Cabinet Member should be considered in due course along with appropriate adjustments to the budget as described above.

### **1.3 Revenue Grants for Sports and Arts**

#### **(a) Background to the Grant Regime**

1.3.1 Grants of up to £400 are available to support small scale sports and arts development projects, with a particular focus on target groups such as people with disabilities, and Senior Citizens. Sporting and artistic excellence grants of up to £400 are awarded to outstanding individuals towards the costs of equipment, training, travel expenses etc.

#### **(b) Scope of the Review**

1.3.2 The review has assessed whether it is appropriate to continue to award such grants, whether they are focused adequately on meeting local needs and target groups and whether the criteria for their award remain appropriate.

#### **(c) Issues Arising from Consultation**

1.3.3 Consultation with sports and arts organisations was undertaken as part of the review. The results are attached at Annex 2. In general terms, the availability of such grant support was welcomed and no need for major changes to the procedures for applying, awarding and monitoring grants was identified. These procedures were found to be straightforward and satisfactory. Many organisations reported that, notwithstanding the small amounts available, such grants made a significant difference. Some issues that were identified related to the need for the grant criteria to be better publicised and for grants to be focused on organisations and individuals with local Borough connections.

#### **(d) Options for Change**

1.3.4 No significant changes are considered necessary. There is historically a good spread of applications across the sports and arts categories, and within the Borough. The scheme is publicised in the annual Leisure Guide and on the Council website. A large proportion of applications are brought forward as a result of direct liaison between Development Officers within Leisure Services and local clubs/organisations.

1.3.5 There is clearly a need in the literature sent to applicants to outline the criteria against which grants are awarded. It would also appear from the consultation

exercise that applicants welcome the Council monitoring the impact of grants, and this is currently undertaken six months after the award has been made.

1.3.6 Excellence grants are awarded to enable the applicant to continue to improve, which is well illustrated by Robbie Swift (the Council's first recipient of a Young Achievers Award) reaching a ranking of number one in the world of windsurfing.

1.3.7 To reflect the relatively low level of individual grants, it would appear appropriate, should delegated decision making by Cabinet Portfolio Holders be introduced in the future, that the award of such grants should become a matter delegated to the Cabinet Member for Leisure Facilities, Culture and Youth, following consultation with the relevant Advisory Board.

#### (e) Recommendations

1.3.8 The Review Group recommends that:

- (i) revenue grants for sports and arts development/excellence be retained in accordance with existing arrangements;
- (ii) applicants be advised of the criteria against which awards are made;
- (iii) a report be submitted annually to Members on the impact of grants awarded in the previous financial year;
- (iv) subject to its wider introduction, decisions on grants should be delegated to the Cabinet Member for Leisure Facilities Culture and Youth, following consultation with the relevant Advisory Board.

## **1.4 Capital Grants to Organisations**

### (a) Background to Grant regime

1.4.1 Capital grants of up to £25,000 are awarded annually to voluntary organisations to support projects of a leisure or recreational nature. Grants are limited to 25% of project costs up to a maximum grant of £25,000. Applicants need to demonstrate that support funding is available to enable the project to proceed. Criteria has been adopted to guide the award of grants mainly linked to key priorities included in the Borough Leisure Strategy.

### (b) Scope of the review

1.4.2 The review has assessed whether such grants should continue to be awarded and if so, whether the current focus on leisure-related projects remains appropriate in the light of the Council's adopted key priorities.

### (c) Issues Arising from Consultation

1.4.3 The views elicited from consultation with local groups are similar to those set out in para 1.2.3 above.

### (d) Options for Change

1.4.4 The scheme has been extremely successful in promoting wider access within the local community to facilities and enabling local clubs and organisations to develop their role, encourage community use and be successful in seeking external funding from sources such as the National Lottery and the Football Foundation. Applicants are judged against the key themes included in the Council's Borough Leisure Strategy (BLS). There is a need to review the existing criteria to ensure that in addition to the key themes in the BLS, resources are being targeted towards the Council's key corporate priorities, for example, crime reduction, youth etc. It is also important to encourage applications based on partnerships, and those that meet the needs of the whole community. A draft list of revised criteria has been developed, and is attached at Annex 5.

### (e) Recommendations

1.4.5 The Review Group recommends that:

- (i) capital grants to organisations be retained on existing arrangements;
- (ii) the revised criteria attached at Annex 5 to this report be considered and approved.

## **1.5 Parish Council Grants**

### (a) Background to the Grant Regimes

1.5.1 Under Section 136 of the Local Government Act 1972, the Borough Council is empowered to provide support to Parish Councils for concurrent functions. The Borough Council uses this power to provide support to Parish Councils for work undertaken by them which would be undertaken by the Borough Council in non-parished areas but not in parished areas.

1.5.2 This support takes the form of revenue and capital grants for works to recreation and amenities (specifically allotments, footpaths, parks, open spaces, sports grounds and village halls), cemeteries and churchyards and footway lighting.

1.5.3 A revenue budget exists for providing revenue grants to parish councils which is usually uplifted by inflation each year. The grants are allocated to parishes by reference to the number of electors in each parish (the basic allocation), the area of cemeteries or churchyards maintained by each parish council and the number

of footway lighting columns which are the responsibility of each parish council. Parishes are required to complete a return at the end of each year showing that the basic allocation has been spent on recreation and amenities functions, and that the allocations for cemeteries and churchyards and for footway lighting have been spent on those functions.

- 1.5.4 Capital grants are available to support specific projects within the headings recreation and amenities, cemeteries and churchyards and footway lighting. There is an annual budget of £79,000 which is supplemented by recycling unused grant from previous awards. Parish Councils must submit annual bids for an unlimited number of projects, ranking their bids in order of priority. The number of bids that can be supported depends on the amount of budget available for allocation – in the last two years only priority one applications have been supported. Grants are awarded according to a formula based on the number of electors in a parish. This formula guarantees grant of at least 50% of costs up to £10,000 and 25% of costs over £10,000. Smaller parishes (measured by number of electors) may obtain grant at 75% for part of the project costs up to £10,000. There is a minimum size of project eligible for capital grant based on the lower of £1 per elector or £6,000. There is a maximum grant of £25,000.

#### (b) Scope of the Review

- 1.5.5 The review has assessed the appropriateness of the grant regime in the light of the concurrent functions undertaken by the Parish Councils. It has assessed the need for changes to the system of revenue support funding and has investigated the need to revise the current adopted criteria by which capital grants are awarded with a particular focus on a potential need to update these in light of the Borough Council's key priorities.

#### (c) Issues Arising from Consultation

- 1.5.6 Parish Councils were consulted as part of the review and the responses received are set out at Annex 3. In general terms, there was significant support for the continuation of the grants which are provided. It was felt that the current arrangements for funding worked well, addressed the 'double taxation' issue in relation to the concurrent functions and did not need to be adjusted.
- 1.5.7 With regard to capital grants, some Parishes felt that the criteria could be clarified and better publicised. Most felt that the projects they had undertaken were aligned well with local community needs. Excessive monitoring of grant outcomes was not supported but many acknowledged the need for some monitoring to be undertaken to ensure value for money was obtained. The systems in place to apply and assess grants were seen as acceptable.

#### (d) Options for Change

- 1.5.8 The review has not exposed any significant demand for change from Parish Councils. Given the limited targeting of the grants, the existing level of publicity, via the Council's website and direct mailing to each of the parishes, is probably sufficient. In some cases, Parish Councils were not aware of the adopted grant criteria and this could be addressed by refreshing such information where required.
- 1.5.9 The scheme is primarily aimed at dealing with the concurrent functions and double taxation issues, which consultation with parishes suggested worked well. There appears to be little demand for change. Although Parish Councils have discretion to use the revenue funding and apply for capital grants according to their priorities within several fairly broad headings, the areas covered by the scheme go some way to meeting the Council's key priorities.
- 1.5.10 There is considerable scope for meeting the needs of young people as evidenced by the capital grant applications approved for 2004/05 where play equipment and skateboard parks have been the subject of many of the projects. Although facilities such as drop-in centres for young people are not specifically covered, such developments at village halls would be allowable for grant.
- 1.5.11 Reducing the levels of crime, drug and alcohol abuse and anti-social behaviour are not addressed directly, but the provision of alternative recreational facilities has assisted indirectly in addressing these aims.
- 1.5.12 Street scene is not specifically addressed other than by allowing the upgrading of footway lighting to qualify for grant aid but there has been wide scope for projects to improve the open space environment.
- 1.5.13 An option for change which would be to more closely align the scheme to the Council's key aims and objectives. The areas eligible for grant could be extended to include categories for street scene, crime and disorder reduction, drug and alcohol abuse reduction and anti-social behaviour reduction. Such an option would have benefit as this would provide for greater flexibility and local discretion to bring forward local projects for grant support and would enable projects to be more closely aligned to the Council's adopted key priorities.

#### (e) Recommendations

- 1.5.14 The Review Group recommends that:
- (i) The categories of activity eligible for revenue and capital grant aid be extended to include projects covering street scene, crime and disorder reduction, drug and alcohol abuse reduction and anti-social behaviour reduction;
  - (ii) the publicity and information regarding grant criteria be refreshed to reflect these changes.

## 1.6 Citizens' Advice Bureaux

### (a) Background to the Grant Regime

1.6.1 The Borough Council provides grant assistance to the Malling and Tonbridge Citizens' Advice Bureaux on an annual basis. Due to the increased costs arising from the mandatory requirements of the National Association of Citizens' Advice Bureaux, levels of grant support have been increasing. For 2004/05, the Council has agreed to grants of £51,544 for the Malling Bureau and £68,880 for the Tonbridge Bureau.

### (b) Scope of the Review

1.6.2 The review has assessed the problem of growing dependency of the two bureaux on Borough Council grant support. It has assessed the implications of reducing or withdrawing such support and whether the Council should continue to fund them in recognition of the community support role they undertake.

### (c) Consultation

1.6.3 A comparison with other Kent Authorities has been undertaken to assess the extent of public funding support given to bureaux in other districts - see Annex 4. This reveals a common level of support of around £50k per bureaux and highlights the increased costs where a district has more than one such facility like Tonbridge and Malling.

### (d) Options for Change

1.6.4 Through the elimination of support for Citizen's Advice Bureaux from central government, local government has become the main funding body and our support is not out of line with other districts in Kent. Because of the high proportion of the CABs' funding now coming from the Borough Council, any significant reduction is likely to lead to closure of the service or, at best, a severe curtailment.

1.6.5 The review group considers that the CABs offer a valuable service to the general public and that the funding should be maintained. There is, however, a justification to adopt a more structured approach to the monitoring of the performance of each CAB given the very high level of grant which is awarded. The terms of such a Service Level Agreement would need to be formulated in due course but could, for example, be linked to the CABs continuing to retain their accreditation standards along with the submission of appropriate performance information.

1.6.6 Finally, it is felt that the growing dependency of the CABs on Council funding generally should be a matter which is taken up with NACAB and Central Government with the support of local MPs.

(e) Recommendations

1.6.7 The Review Group recommends that:

- (i) the present funding arrangements continue subject to the development of a Service Level Agreement with each CAB, the terms of which will be a matter for future consideration by the Cabinet;
- (ii) the Borough Council raises the issue of funding dependency with NACAB and Central Government with the support of local MPs.

Background papers:

contact: Mark Raymond

Nil

David Hughes  
Chief Executive

## GRANTS TO VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS

<b>ORGANISATION</b>	<b>2001</b> £	<b>2002</b> £	<b>2003</b> £
Age Concern – Malling	2500	2500	2500
Age Concern – Tonbridge	500	500	500
Alzheimer's Disease Society	500	500	500
The Bridge Trust	3000	3000	3000
British Cardiac Patients Association	100		
British Trust For Conservation Volunteers	1600	1600	1600
Christians Caring	100	100	100
Citizens' Rights for Older People	100	200	100
Compaid Trust	2000	2000	2000
Disabled Persons Accommodation Agency	100		100
Dyslexia Institute	500	500	500
Ems Flat Project		750	
The Fox Project	100	100	100
The Good Companions Club	100	100	
Greenfingers Training Scheme	200		200
Heart of Kent Hospice	2000	2000	2000
Hi-Kent	250	250	250
Home Start	400	250	400
Hospice in the Weald	1500	1500	1500
Kent Association for the Blind	1000	1000	1000
Kent Association for the Disabled	100	100	100
Kent Association of Parish Councils	1500	1500	1500
Kent Family Mediation Service	200	200	200
Kent Rural Community Council	750	750	750

<b>ORGANISATION</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Kent Wildlife Trust	<b>2000</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2000</b>
Leybourne Grange Riding School for the Disabled	<b>500</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>500</b>
Maidstone Domestic Violence Forum	<b>500</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>500</b>
Maidstone & Malling Neighbourhood Watch	<b>1750</b>	<b>1750</b>	<b>1750</b>
Maidstone Cruse	<b>250</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>250</b>
Maidstone Mediation Scheme	<b>750</b>	<b>750</b>	<b>750</b>
Maidstone Pre-School Learning Alliance	<b>500</b>		<b>500</b>
Maidstone Victim Support	<b>500</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>500</b>
Malling Area Volunteer Bureau	<b>2000</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2000</b>
Malling Holiday Playscheme – Special Needs			<b>1500</b>
National Childbirth Trust	<b>200</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>200</b>
National Council for One Parent Families	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	
Orchid Club for the Blind and Partially Sighted	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
Parenthood	<b>200</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>200</b>
Positive Ageing	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
Relate – West Kent	<b>2500</b>	<b>1500</b>	<b>2500</b>
Remap GB	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
Re-Solv	<b>200</b>	<b>200</b>	
Royal Association in Aid of Deaf People	<b>200</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>200</b>
Samaritans (Maidstone & Weald)	<b>600</b>	<b>600</b>	<b>600</b>
Samaritans (Tunbridge Wells & District)	<b>200</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>200</b>
Scotts Project	<b>1500</b>	<b>1500</b>	<b>1500</b>
Shelter (Kent Housing Aid)	<b>1000</b>	<b>1000</b>	<b>1000</b>
Spadework	<b>600</b>	<b>600</b>	<b>600</b>
St George's Court Social Club			<b>250</b>
Tonbridge Active Retirement	<b>100</b>		<b>100</b>
Tonbridge District Scout Council	<b>200</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>200</b>
Tonbridge Cottage Hospital (League of Friends)	<b>500</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>500</b>
Tonbridge Crime Prevention Panel		<b>100</b>	<b>400</b>
Tonbridge Pre-School Learning Alliance	<b>500</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>500</b>

<b>ORGANISATION</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Tonbridge VIP Crafts	<b>200</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>200</b>
Tonbridge Volunteer Bureau	<b>1300</b>	<b>1300</b>	<b>1300</b>
Tonbridge Voluntary Service Unit (VSU) 'Youth in Action'	<b>3000</b>	<b>3000</b>	<b>3000</b>
Tonbridge War Relief Fund	<b>500</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>500</b>
Tonbridge & Malling Access Group	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
Tonbridge Young Women's Project	<b>250</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>250</b>
The Trottiscliffe Society	<b>100</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100</b>
Tunbridge Wells Counselling Centre	<b>250</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>250</b>
Tunbridge Wells Mental Health Resource	<b>250</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>250</b>
Weald of Kent Crossroads	<b>250</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>250</b>
West Kent Council for Voluntary Services	<b>750</b>	<b>750</b>	<b>750</b>
West Kent Cruse	<b>250</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>250</b>
West Kent Neighbourhood Watch Association	<b>750</b>	<b>750</b>	<b>750</b>
West Kent Victim Support	<b>300</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>300</b>
West Kent YMCA	<b>250</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>250</b>
West Kent Independent Mediation Service	<b>500</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>500</b>
Winged Fellowship Trust	<b>250</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>250</b>

**SCRUTINY REVIEW OF GRANTS TO PARISH COUNCILS AND ORGANISATIONS  
SPORTS & ARTS GROUP RESPONSES**

Comment Theme	Detailed Comment	Received From
The need for grants	<p>Without your help we would not have been able to achieve our objectives within such a short timescale.</p> <p>We are very grateful for the financial support which could not be obtained elsewhere.</p> <p>It is appropriate that the Council should provide a limited level of support in recognition of our efforts. We receive no subsidy from any other public body and work benefits the borough population.</p> <p>We feel very welcomed and appreciated by our local borough council in being awarded a grant which benefits many youngsters and is an endorsement of the council's involvement and approval.</p> <p>Small organisations need support to develop and grow independence. If they are offering something to the community, financial support should be given. Grants enable people to pursue projects which would otherwise be difficult to fund.</p> <p>We are not allowed to charge for our services and rely on donations. The grants we have received have been very helpful indeed.</p>	<p>Borough Green Bowls Club</p> <p>Tonbridge Folk Club/Mummers &amp; Hoodeners</p> <p>Oast Theatre</p> <p>Tonbridge Dance Festival Association</p> <p>Platonic</p> <p>Tonbridge Scout and Guide Band</p>

Comment Theme	Detailed Comment	Received From
	<p>We have appreciated the support we received and we do hope that the council will still be able to support clubs and associations in the community.</p> <p>At times, the small grants we have received have made the difference between life and death to our organisation. In the Malling area, people rely on the support they receive from parish councils and voluntary organisations, this would not be possible without funding from the borough council.</p> <p>The organisation should receive funding because it provides a worthwhile service to the community. The Christmas Festival is an excellent and important way of promoting the town.</p>	<p>Tonbridge Juddians RFC</p> <p>Opportunities Through Leisure</p> <p>Tonbridge Christmas Festival</p>
Application procedure	<p>Grants have been satisfactory in all respects.</p> <p>Extremely satisfied with the current administration of the scheme which is efficient, fair and not too bureaucratic. A really good and well administered scheme.</p> <p>Procedures were straightforward and not overly bureaucratic.</p> <p>The current application form is perfectly straightforward to complete and presumably gives sufficient information on which to make a decision.</p> <p>We did not find the application procedure to be onerous. Many people are put off by form filling and assistance would be beneficial to many at this stage.</p>	<p>Borough Green Bowls Club</p> <p>Tonbridge Folk Club/Mummers &amp; Hoodeners</p> <p>Oast Theatre</p> <p>Tonbridge Scout and Guide Band</p> <p>Tonbridge Cricket Club</p>

Comment Theme	Detailed Comment	Received From
	<p>The current procedure is satisfactory, the application forms are clear and unambiguous with the reply prompt to the timetable laid down.</p> <p>Compared to other funding organisations , we find the borough council application forms leave a lot to be desired.</p> <p>We cannot find any problem with the way the grant scheme is run.</p>	<p>Tonbridge Juddians RFC</p> <p>Opportunities Through Leisure</p> <p>Tunbury Hall Cttee</p>
Grant criteria	<p>Grant criteria should be updated regularly.</p> <p>Flexible criteria is essential because each group or individual has its own needs and requirements.</p> <p>We have no knowledge of the procedures or criteria to be met when applications are assessed.</p> <p>Not aware of the full criteria on which grants are awarded, but a flexible approach would be better.</p> <p>Grant criteria should be reviewed as these seem to be handed out rather indiscriminately at present.</p>	<p>Tonbridge Dance Festival Platonic</p> <p>Tonbridge Scout and Guide Band</p> <p>Tonbridge Juddians RFC</p> <p>Tonbridge Civic Society</p>
Community & borough priorities and outcomes	<p>It is not always the immediate outcome which is paramount, but an investment in an enriched community future.</p> <p>We would need to know what these priorities are and how they change over time.</p>	<p>Tonbridge Dance Festival</p> <p>Platonic</p>

Comment Theme	Detailed Comment	Received From
	<p>It is of great benefit to local communities and voluntary organisations that the local council know the people and the problems and can pinpoint the priorities. Grants should all be focused on local projects for the benefit of local communities.</p> <p>Grants should be for the benefit of the whole community, if they were more focussed I suspect that many worthy clubs and organisations would miss out.</p> <p>Grants should be more focussed on positive outcomes, provided smaller organisations are treated the same as larger ones. The priorities of communities are not always the same as those of the borough council.</p> <p>With reference to the Cultural Strategy, we believe the event complements the borough's objectives.</p>	<p>Tonbridge Cricket Club</p> <p>Tonbridge Juddians RFC</p> <p>Opportunities Through Leisure</p> <p>Tonbridge Christmas Festival</p>
Grant dependency	<p>The Theatre is self-supporting and occasional grants received have not altered this.</p> <p>Consideration should be given to organisations' own efforts to raise funding.</p> <p>With the spiralling costs of projects of all sizes, I cannot see how it is possible to avoid dependency on public sector funding. Rightly or wrongly, the community expect local authorities to support local projects.</p> <p>Grant recipients are not solely dependent on public sector funding but put any grant given with their own fundraising activities to meet their objectives.</p>	<p>Oast Theatre</p> <p>Tonbridge Scout and Guide Band</p> <p>Tonbridge Cricket Club</p> <p>Tonbridge Juddians RFC</p>

Comment Theme	Detailed Comment	Received From
	<p>Many voluntary organisations provide a valid service and are often the only providers. Support should be given. Some organisations should receive 'one off' grants with a stated time period for reapplying.</p>	<p>Opportunities Through Leisure</p>
<p>Monitoring</p>	<p>With large sums of money, extensive monitoring is necessary, but the small but valuable sums given fairly informally to local groups should not require extensive monitoring which would result in much extra work for the council staff and for unpaid club organisers.</p> <p>The current practice of requiring receipted invoices would seem to be quite sufficient.</p> <p>As a charity, our records are open to scrutiny and submitted at the time of application. As artists, our work is flexible and can evolve in unpredictable ways which cannot necessarily be monitored in 'black and white' terms.</p> <p>Where larger grants are given, monitoring progress/outcome would be necessary, but in the case of smaller grants we would suggest this would not be economic.</p> <p>Monitoring is necessary to ensure the council gets good value for money.</p> <p>All grants should be strictly monitored to prevent abuse.</p> <p>Outcomes of grants should be monitored and an end of year report should be made by organisations receiving grant aid.</p>	<p>Tonbridge Folk Club/Mummers &amp; Hoodeners</p> <p>Oast Theatre</p> <p>Tonbridge Dance Festival Platonic</p> <p>Tonbridge Scout and Guide Band</p> <p>Tonbridge Cricket Club</p> <p>Tonbridge Juddians RFC</p> <p>Opportunities Through Leisure</p>

Comment Theme	Detailed Comment	Received From
Grants appropriate to level of need	<p>The level of support given is appropriate given the large number of calls the borough must receive.</p> <p>The present level of grant is quite appropriate, grants should be awarded only where the recipient is making a larger contribution.</p> <p>Local need must be measured by response to applications for grants.</p> <p>It is far better to give the majority of grants in relatively small amounts rather than fund just one or two massive projects. Most community demands are for small amounts and can benefit a lot of people.</p> <p>Grants should be distributed evenly. More help should be given to smaller voluntary organisations in the community.</p> <p>The grant is insufficient for the event. An increase in direct funding from the council would allow us to safeguard essential elements of the programme leaving us free to get on with the planning sooner rather than having to leave everything to the last 3 months.</p> <p>Need should be considered, but the contribution of an organisation to the welfare of the community should be taken into account.</p>	<p>Oast Theatre</p> <p>Tonbridge Dance Festival</p> <p>Platonic</p> <p>Tonbridge Cricket Club</p> <p>Opportunities Through Leisure</p> <p>Tonbridge Christmas Festival</p> <p>Tonbridge Civic Society</p>
Other comments	<p>Grants could be offered twice yearly as projects may arise after the current deadline.</p> <p>Applications for grants could be advertised in local papers to encourage a whole range of possible abilities.</p>	<p>Platonic</p> <p>Platonic</p>

Comment Theme	Detailed Comment	Received From
	<p>Quick decisions are beneficial, far better to say no quickly than wait and lose time applying elsewhere.</p> <p>Perhaps parish councils should give financial support to organisations which operate in their parish with the borough council supporting organisations which work throughout either the Tonbridge or Malling areas.</p>	<p>Tonbridge Cricket Club</p> <p>Opportunities Through Leisure</p>

## PARISH COUNCIL RESPONSES

Comment Theme	Detailed Comment	Received From
The need for grants	<p>Tonbridge &amp; Malling's framework of financial arrangements with parish councils addresses the 'double taxation' issue in relation to concurrent functions, provides a meaningful role for parish councils and strengthens partnership working between the 2 tiers.</p> <p>It is appropriate to offer grants to organisations carrying out work that TMBC might otherwise have to do itself. Grants help generate community ownership of projects. Local organisations are better able to identify needs and target services appropriately and can use TMBC funds to lever in other external funding.</p> <p>The grant schemes are an invaluable source of funding and should not be altered in any way and should not be reduced.</p> <p>The grants accommodate the 'double rating' issue. One way to address this is for Tonbridge to be parished or else to be subject to a special rate.</p> <p>Grants can offer significant benefits to parishioners.</p> <p>Grants to parish councils should be continued as the current financial arrangements were made to partly offset the cost of providing parish facilities in Tonbridge.</p>	<p>Aylesford</p> <p>Offham</p> <p>East Peckham</p> <p>West Malling</p> <p>Wrotham</p> <p>East Malling &amp; Larkfield</p>

Comment Theme	Detailed Comment	Received From
	<p>The grants grew out of the perceived inequity that parish ratepayers were not only having to pay for their own recreational facilities but also making contributions to the recreational facilities in the un-parished area. The grants should be continued because there is still a perceived inequity.</p> <p>Grants should not be viewed in isolation from the taxation issue – the ‘double taxation’ question should be an integral part of the review.</p> <p>The grants awarded are a great help to get projects moving, as a small parish council we would be in difficulty without such grants.</p>	<p>Addington</p> <p>Hadlow</p> <p>Platt</p>
Application procedure	<p>Procedures are straightforward and clear with plenty of notice from the borough.</p> <p>The system works quite well.</p> <p>Present arrangements are relatively simple and transparent and ensure fairness in the provision of services between the parished and unparished parts of the borough. We would not like to see the existing, largely successful arrangements ‘dismantled’ or ‘watered down’.</p> <p>The process is very easy.</p> <p>A published set of criteria could be made available with the application form.</p> <p>The procedures for applying and awarding grants are satisfactory. The information supplied is adequate and more information can always be obtained from Financial Services officers.</p> <p>The procedures for applying and awarding grants are satisfactory.</p>	<p>Wateringbury</p> <p>Ditton</p> <p>Aylesford</p> <p>Offham</p> <p>West Malling</p> <p>Wrotham</p> <p>Borough Green</p>

Comment Theme	Detailed Comment	Received From
	<p>The system is good from an administrative point of view.</p> <p>The procedures have been streamlined over the years and are quite simple and straightforward.</p> <p>The present procedures are adequate.</p>	<p>East Malling &amp; Larkfield</p> <p>Addington</p> <p>Hadlow</p>
Grant criteria	<p>Additional information on key selection criteria for approving applications might help with prioritising funding. The distinction between revenue 'Special Works' and Capital Works is not completely clear. The criteria for the Special Projects grants are 'on the basis of their merits' – this is too vague.</p> <p>We are not totally aware of what the criteria are.</p> <p>It would be difficult to adjust the criteria as they are set out in the Act as concurrent functions.</p> <p>The current scheme supports capital projects and the revenue implications are left to be absorbed by the parish or community group. A broader approach might be beneficial and would allow start up costs to be given greater weight and might also include the first two years of ongoing revenue costs.</p>	<p>Offham</p> <p>Borough Green</p> <p>Addington</p> <p>Hadlow</p>
Community & borough priorities	<p>All grant applications are focussed on leisure activities and the PC has tried to align these with the borough council's priorities.</p> <p>The parish council seeks to ensure positive community outcomes and to align initiatives with local needs, whether or not they are borough council supported.</p>	<p>Wateringbury</p> <p>Aylesford</p>

Comment Theme	Detailed Comment	Received From
	<p>Desired community outcomes must be clearly defined, with clear and verifiable indicators and time frames. TMBC should provide clear information on priorities.</p> <p>TMBCs priorities would need to be published, the distinction between revenue and capital grants needs to be reiterated.</p> <p>As far as this parish council is concerned, all requests for grant aid are entirely focussed on positive community outcomes and aligned with community priorities.</p> <p>The current system has allowed us to receive financial assistance towards improving facilities at village halls, providing ball parks and other improvements.</p> <p>The grant is very closely allied to community priorities as it is assessed by the parish council against competing demands before any request is made. It may be thought that the borough was interfering in parish matters.</p>	<p>Offham</p> <p>West Malling</p> <p>Borough Green</p> <p>East Malling &amp; Larkfield</p> <p>Addington</p>
Grant dependency	<p>Limited public funding is currently provided to projects which tend to be for the public good and it is therefore appropriate that funding is obtained from the borough. Projects are often of limited interest to the private sector, limiting funding opportunities. Organisations should have to produce a business plan to demonstrate sustainability.</p> <p>Criteria should be established to relieve dependency.</p> <p>When major grants are requested, a business plan should be submitted.</p>	<p>Offham</p> <p>West Malling</p> <p>Borough Green</p>

Comment Theme	Detailed Comment	Received From
	<p>All expenditure is from the ratepayer excepting a very small income from other sources so dependency is already complete.</p> <p>Access to grants for projects through the scheme has enabled the parish to secure external funding towards projects.</p>	<p>Addington</p> <p>Hadlow</p>
Monitoring	<p>Support monitoring, not only on completion but by inspection or regular updating of progress to the borough council.</p> <p>Monitoring outputs and outcomes would be beneficial in determining success of grant assistance.</p> <p>The system in place currently is adequate and the possible creation of more paperwork etc is unnecessary. A report could be requested as part of the application process.</p> <p>More formal monitoring would be appropriate.</p> <p>There should be a triennial audit in which the recipient is obliged to give a short report of the success or otherwise of the project and a projection of the future.</p>	<p>Wateringbury</p> <p>Offham</p> <p>Plaxtol</p> <p>West Malling</p> <p>Wrotham, Borough Green</p> <p>Addington</p>
Grants appropriate to level of need	<p>Local need should not be based on head count figures. Adjacent parishes could adopt a 'cluster' approach when support is required for similar projects.</p> <p>The criteria for determining grants should be widened to include figures for the total population rather than the number on the electoral register. Current levels of grant are appropriate to local need.</p>	<p>Offham</p> <p>Wrotham</p>

Comment Theme	Detailed Comment	Received From
	Current levels are appropriate, however there is scope for educating parish councils to be more responsible in their applications.	Borough Green
Other comments	<p>Consideration could be given to allowing applications towards a project where grants are obtained from a 3<sup>rd</sup> party, e.g. Sports Council.</p> <p>Need clarification of how the amount of assistance is decided upon, is 25% a typical figure or does each application have to meet certain criteria before the amount is decided?</p> <p>Consider giving support to parish councils in goods, kind or expertise.</p> <p>Information on grants is not readily available, centralised provision of information would be very beneficial.</p> <p>Useful features of the WREN (landfill tax) application process included providing clear criteria to ensure time is not wasted in submitting a 'no-hope' application, having to demonstrate community support, evidence of seeking funds from other sources and demonstrating long term sustainability.</p> <p>Satisfied with the systems in place at the moment.</p> <p>There should be more promotion of the grant schemes and criteria to organisations and groups.</p> <p>In principle we think that the borough council should continue with grants to voluntary organisations.</p>	<p>Waterinbury</p> <p>Ditton</p> <p>Aylesford</p> <p>Offham</p> <p>Offham</p> <p>Plaxtol</p> <p>East Peckham</p> <p>East Malling &amp; Larkfield</p>

Comment Theme	Detailed Comment	Received From
	We hope that there could be more flexibility and more discretion given to Tonbridge & Malling officers. In particular we do not want to be in a position of having to choose between equally worthwhile schemes.	Platt

## Scrutiny Review of Grants to Parish Councils and Organisations

## Grant Funding in Kent authorities - update

	<b>Do you award grants to Citizens' Advice Bureaux?</b>	<b>Do you award grants to volunteer bureaux?</b>	<b>Do you award grants to your district/area's Council for Voluntary Services?</b>
TMBC	£115,000 2 offices Malling £48,000 Tonbridge £67,000	£7,300  Malling £6,000 Tonbridge £1,300	£750 (W Kent CVS)
Canterbury CC	£118,948 3 offices	£4,200 Herne Bay £2,000 Canterbury £2,200	£12,000
Dover DC	£50,500 2 offices	£4,183 given in total to 13 voluntary organisations	No
Sevenoaks DC	£138,482 3 offices Edenbridge £45,320 Sevenoaks £50,113 Swanley £43,049	£18,500  Edenbridge £1,500 Sevenoaks £7,500 Swanley £9,500	£8,000  W Kent CVS £5,000 N W Kent CVS £3,000
Shepway DC	£57,000 1 office	No	No
Swale BC	£130,100 2 offices	No	No
Thanet DC	£50,040 1 office	£15,610 1 office	£4,500

Tunbridge Wells BC	£190,020 3 offices Tun Wells £121,920 Pad Wood £33,180 Cranbrook £34,920	No	£10,500 (W Kent CVS)
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### Capital Grants to Organisations – Revised Criteria

In considering applications, the Council will pay particular attention to the following criteria:

- 1 Identification of Need – Confirmation of need for new facilities/activities in relation to existing provision.
- 2 Public/Community Benefit – The extent to which the proposal benefits access to the local community as a whole, and contributes to the Council's key corporate priorities, for example, youth, crime reduction.
- 3 Provision for Priority Groups/Social Inclusion – The extent to which the proposal meets the needs of young people, people with disabilities, senior citizens and those on a low income.
- 4 Partnerships – Evidence that the applicant is working in partnership with others, including the public, private and voluntary sectors.
- 5 Proportion of Club/Organisation's Membership Living within Borough – It is essential that any primarily benefits residents of the Borough.
- 6 Financial Position – Levels of funds held by club/organisation and importance of grant in ensuring project will proceed.
- 7 Sustainability – Evidence that the applicant will be able to meet the future revenue costs associated with the proposal.
- 8 Level of Grant-Aid received in the past from the Borough Council – When appropriate, priority will be given to organisations who have not received support from the Council in the past.
- 9 Grants Received from Other Sources – Evidence not only of success, but also that the applicant has applied to other bodies, and is actively seeking funds from other sources.
- 10 Legal issues – evidence that the club/organisation is properly constituted, owns or has an appropriate lease on the site, and has obtained planning permission/landlord's consent.