

FRIENDS OF ESSEX CHURCHES – REQUEST FOR FUNDING

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report seeks Members' views on a request for financial assistance towards the work of the Friends of Essex Churches.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Friends of Essex Churches, a registered charity, raises money for the repair and restoration of churches and chapels of every denomination throughout Essex. Money is raised by donation, legacy and fundraising events and then given in grants.
- 2.2 A letter has been received from the charity explaining that in recent years money has been received from Waste Recycling Environmental Limited (WREN), part of the Essex Environmental Trust, but that this source of revenue is coming to an end. Accordingly, the charity is now requesting local councils give consideration to providing funds to ensure repair and restoration work to churches and chapels can continue.

3 DISCUSSION

- 3.1 There is no doubt that churches and chapels make an important contribution to the appearance and character of the county, and that keeping these buildings in a good state of repair is very expensive. However, there are many organisations that seek funds from local councils and in this case it is not considered that a grant would be justified.
- 3.2 Over the years, the Council has, in fact, given financial support to a wide range of listed buildings in the district, including the historic churches. Therefore, the Council is already committed, where appropriate, to give assistance for repair works, though clearly for the churches, the grants from the Friends of Essex Churches has provided additional support, particularly as a result of the assistance from WREN.
- 3.3 Nevertheless, it is concluded that it would not be appropriate to provide grant assistance to the Friends of Essex Churches.

4 RECOMMENDATION

- 4.1 It is proposed that the Executive Board **RESOLVES**

That the Friends of Essex Churches be advised that Rochford District Council is not able to provide financial assistance to assist the operation of their organisation.

Shaun Scrutton

Head of Planning & Transportation

Background Papers:-

Letter from Friends of Essex Churches – April 2007

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