
REPORT TO THE MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE 3 MARCH 2021

PORTFOLIO: COMMUNITIES

REPORT FROM: ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, PEOPLE & COMMUNITIES

SUBJECT: PROCESS FOR AWARDING VOLUNTARY SECTOR GRANTS 2021/22

1 DECISION BEING RECOMMENDED

- 1.1 To put in place a procedure for allocating the Voluntary Sector Grants fund for the financial year 2021/22.
- 1.2 To agree that this process remains clear and transparent whilst aligning outcomes with those identified in the Rochford District Council (RDC) Business Plan relating to partnership working and links to the joint Rochford & Castle Point Health & Wellbeing Strategy (HWBS).
- 1.3 To agree that the Rayleigh, Rochford and District Association for Voluntary Services (RRAVS) will receive top sliced funding from the same pot, based on outcomes aligned with the Essex County Council performance framework and the HWBS Action Plan.

2 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 Providing financial assistance to local voluntary organisations helps to generate a stronger third sector in the District.
- 2.2 A close focus on the Council's Business Plan and HWBS outcomes will provide information and understanding of the wider system impacts of the voluntary sector grants fund in the District.

3 SALIENT INFORMATION

- 3.1 Applications for small grants would be open to all voluntary sector groups that meet established criteria. Any one group can apply for revenue funding to a maximum of £1,000. No capital funding will be available.
- 3.2 All funding will be allocated subject to applicants demonstrating how their activities contribute to the HWBS outcomes, to include:
 - Reducing overweight and obesity levels;
 - Improving mental health and wellbeing (mental health, dementia, loneliness, child poverty/employment);
 - Supporting people to lead independent lives and to stay in their own homes as long as possible; and

- Additionally, funding will be allocated subject to applicants demonstrating how their activities contribute to the district's community resilience.
- 3.3 A Member Advisory Group appointed by the Portfolio Holder for Community will be consulted on allocating funding for the small grants scheme, using an agreed scoring system. A scoring system for assessing small grant applications will ensure the process is consistent, open and transparent. This is particularly important if any decisions are challenged. Unsuccessful applicants will be signposted to other agencies that may be able to offer support, for example, Big Lottery and Sport England.
- 3.4 It is intended that the funding to RRAVS will be top sliced from the overall pot up to a total of £15,000. The Council will assess the application from RRAVS separately and they will be asked to provide additional information on how their service meets the needs of local voluntary and community sector groups and residents.
- 3.5 A provisional activity timeline is set out below:

The Executive for agreement on 2021/22 VSG Process	3 March 2021
Open applications for small grants after budget allocation are set and Executive Process Paper approved	11 March 2021
Close small grants applications	8 April 2021
Portfolio Holder to consult Member Advisory Group to determine small grant allocations from applications received	Post 9 April 2021
Allocations made	May 2021

- 3.6 For 2020/21 RRAVS received a £15,000 grant and a total of 11 awards were made in small grants ranging from £900 to £1000 to other local organisations. An update report from 2020/21 allocations is included in Appendix 1.

4 RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Any delay in making a decision is likely to inhibit local voluntary groups finalising their budget plans for 2021/22 and impact on the good relationships developed with local groups through the strong partnership and network development with the Health & Wellbeing Board

5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 A sum of £25,000 is available to fund the scheme in 2021/22, and total allocations will be contained within this amount.

6 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

7 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has been completed and found there to be no impacts (either positive or negative) on protected groups as defined under the Equality Act 2010. The EIA will be considered in determining the overall budget allocation.

I confirm that the above recommendation does not depart from Council policy and that appropriate consideration has been given to any budgetary and legal implications.

LT Lead Officer Signature:



Assistant Director, People & Communities

Background Papers:-

None.

For further information please contact Kelly Redston (Strategic Partnership Officer)

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If you would like this report in large print, Braille or another language please contact 01702 318111.

Appendix 1

Voluntary Sector Grants 2020/21 - Outcomes Highlight Report

RRAVS

- A core community hub partner - ongoing
- Recruited 275 community-based volunteers to support the outcomes of the hub. Support ongoing.
- Working with Holy Trinity Church Rayleigh to improve on existing befriending service.
- New reporting systems set up with the MegaCentre to update on available volunteers - ongoing.
- Ongoing social media messaging with hub partners and Essex Coronavirus Action, >800 visits to website a month.
- Sharing information including Dementia Support, Mental Health Support, funding, community initiatives, foodbank locations and opening times with member organisations and residents.
- Weekly updates and 'check ins' with all member organisations with information including funding, government guidelines and volunteering exceptions.
- Work with schools and foodbanks to support families during the holidays.

RRAVS – New Steps project and example of community resilience

- Volunteers from New Steps set up a communication tree. Regular calls made a real difference to these people's lives and helped to reduce their loneliness.
- The group members were empowered to call other members and over time, they created their own social bubbles virtually and then socially distanced as the weather improved and the restrictions eased.
- The volunteers completed over 700 hours of volunteers for the calls and helped with shopping and medication collections.

OTHER VOLUNTARY SECTOR GRANT OUTCOMES

- A range of grants were allocated to other voluntary sector organisations as highlighted in Table A. Due to the C-19 restrictions, it has been agreed that some of these organisations would carry forward their grant monies and report in 2021/22 on their outcomes.

TABLE A

Organisation and Project	Organisation and description	Grant Purpose	Outcomes
Ramblers Therapy Ponies £1000	The Ramblers Therapy Ponies.	Equine Assisted Therapy courses and increase our 'reach' to residents	Impacted by the pandemic. Carry forward of monies agreed.
Talking Newspapers £1000	Rayleigh, Rochford & Castle Point Talking Newspapers	A new multi board machine to copy USB sticks.	Installed.
Essex Community First Aid Events Volunteers £1000	Essex Community First Aid Events Volunteers - Provide free First Aid at public events	To fund essential medical supplies /equipment	Defibrillator and training Defibrillator purchased. Training staff returning to the NHS and those that have been redeployed.
Supporting Carers and Families Together £1000	Supporting Carers and Families Together - To relieve the social, emotional, mental, physical and educational needs of Carers and their families through the provision of support, person and group centred interventions, advice, guidance and signposting to other services as appropriate.	To provide free training to the public, clubs, charities and schools.	<p>Outcomes achieved include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worked to provide early intervention in the lives of young carers and their families to prevent needs escalating to require more intense health, mental health and social care service involvement. • Built the skills in young people to enable them to be more resilient to life's challenges. • Worked to tackle inequalities and to enable everyone to lead healthier, safer and more fulfilling lives. • Consulted and engaged with our service users to ensure the local community are involved and listened to with regard to meeting existing needs and to developing services to counter emerging needs. • Worked to improve the mental health and wellbeing of those with caring responsibilities, particularly those suffering due to social isolation because of this role. • Supported young people and families where there are long-term health issues and disabilities. <p>We have had contact with and supported around 170 young people with caring responsibilities, from approximately 150 families across the district. We have provided support to local schools (3 secondary and 5 primary) to help them identify and better support young carers.</p> <p>We have received many comments from service users and their families such as:</p> <p><i>"we really do appreciate everything SCAFT does for our family, we couldn't do it without your help and support."</i></p>

			<i>"SCAFTHAVE been so good to me and I don't know where I would be without you, thank you for always listening to me and for giving me support, it means so much."</i>
Memory Lane Café £960	MEMORY LANE CAFÉ - T provide a social environment for carers looking after loved-ones living with the effects of dementia, memory loss etc.	The grant is to help provide a sustainable future for Memory Lane Cafe.	<p>Impacted by the restrictions – services adapted to some limited social and talking services.</p> <p>Feedback Comments: <i>'Improved mental wellbeing- it's so lovely to get out and meet people. We feel so much better afterwards'. 'Thank you for being a lifeline and taking the pressure off of me for a couple of hours'. 'Gives an opportunity to meet and converse with people and have a laugh!' 'Mum is happy, smiling and stimulated'. 'A lovely community feeling for people in similar circumstances'. 'Before today, we had only attended one event (pre lockdown) but have really enjoyed it. Looking forward to becoming more involved' 'Being able to talk to other people – Great'. 'I feel more relaxed. We are not alone'.</i></p>
East Essex Hackspace £1000	East Essex Hackspace - Host a workspace for community use of tools, run actual workshops to teach new skills and meet likeminded people. Enable learning, shared ideas, promoting wellbeing through social engagement- reduce social isolation.	Funding for materials and resources to implement changes as part of the refurbishment plans.	Hack Space now have the equipment in place ready to 'open' pending restrictions.
London Bus Theatre Company £1000	The London Bus Theatre Company - The London Bus Theatre Company aims to improve the quality of life for young people by improving mental health and well-being, increasing confidence, self-esteem, employability and life skills through a range of drama and film making activities.	To provide Year 5 and 6 pupils in the district of Rochford with free interactive drama workshops on mental health and bullying.	<p>Impacted by restrictions. Carry forward of monies agreed to provide 3 days of school workshops.</p> <p>Each 1hr workshop will accommodate up to 60 pupils, 3-4 workshops planned per day.</p>
Wyvern Community Transport £1000	A community transport service	To support volunteers with safety equipment and training supplies.	<p>Supplies provided and used. Training costs supported by grant- it has enabled us to train our volunteers in house</p> <p>Free food parcel delivery service being provided.</p>
Megacentre £1000	The Megacentre Rayleigh (Active Christian Trust) -	To continue to support our existing family's children and young people	We wanted to continue to support our community, which we have done albeit in a different way than our usual work with families, children and young people,

			<p>through telephone calls and zoom catch up meetings as well as through social media.</p> <p>In the summer it was possible for us to arrange some outdoor meetings.</p> <p>The main part of our support has been delivery through the Rochford Community Response telephone helpline. This has had the benefit of allowing us to support a wider demographic, particularly older vulnerable and more isolated residents. Not only have we continued to answer calls for help on the helpline and arranged for community volunteers to help with practical tasks but we have delivered food parcels in partnership with Hopeworx. We are now a satellite centre for Hopeworx, having a storage and distribution facility at the Megacentre.</p>
Bar 'N' Bus £980	Bar 'n' Bus Trust - Supporting young people aged 10-19 through professional, community-based youth work	Branded clothing for raising our visible profile during detached youth work	<p>Clothing purchased.</p> <p>Through the COVID-19 Pandemic, Bar 'n' Bus Youth Workers have been running an extensive programme of community-based detached youth work engaging young people out and about offering advice, support and positive engagements. The clothing has allowed workers to be easily identified as Youth Workers to both young people and members of the public which has helped to ease anxieties and concerns as contact is made.</p> <p>The grant itself covered the purchase of the clothing but enhanced our programme of detached work supporting young people.</p> <p>The work has varied due to restrictions from one-off, socially distanced conversations at the park to positive sports and arts activities during the summer months</p> <p>The key priority area covered by this work is Improving Mental Health and Wellbeing.</p>
Footprints Community Group - £900	Footprints Community Group - overall aim is to connect, strengthen and empower the disadvantage community of the St. Marks area to make positive changes in their lives.	To fund weekly dance sessions. To develop social skills, team work, gain confidence, learn dance an exercise.	Impacted by restrictions. Carry forward of monies agreed.