

Agenda item 7

For Information and discussion: Fundraising support contracts

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Summary

Louise Jones was appointed in March 2016 to deliver a two-year contract to provide fundraising support to local groups and organisations in Frome, based on the agreement at the Council meeting on 24 February 2016 to tender the work. This update is a review of year one of the contract. Louise will present her summary of the year and there will be an opportunity to ask questions.

In next year's budget, there is an additional £10k allocated for 'in house' fundraising to support the work of the town council. A discussion, following this update, will focus on how best to deliver a fundraising service for FTC.

Background

The contract agreed with Louise Jones is for 30 days per year (2.5 days per month or 210 hours) with her time to be used flexibly and by agreement with FTC over the course of each year. To include:

- Advice on governance, organisational objectives and the type of organisation the group may need to consider constituting as
- Support with writing business plans for specific projects
- Direct assistance with bid writing for projects – generally as a training or hand-holding exercise rather than actually undertaking the bid-writing itself, although there may be occasional situations where the latter is preferable
- Help to run and deliver, in conjunction with the Community Project Officer, workshops on specific topics e.g. Tips on fundraising from trusts.
- FTC will refer organisations to Louise
- Group work and individual consultancy to include workshops as requested by the CPO, face to face meetings in Frome, remote working and telephone and email consultations

It was also agreed to review the contract on a regular basis with quarterly reports demonstrating hours used and how they have been used to increase the capacity of local organisations. See Appendix 1 for a full report of the work completed to date.

Discussion

To date, Louise has worked with 11 groups for a total of 175 hours (25 days). There are five days remaining to be delivered before the end of March. She has delivered a training workshop on 'prospect research' (finding the right funders for a project) as part of the Community Groups Training programme and will deliver a second training session on bid writing in due course.

At least five groups are now actively making applications to Trusts and Foundations, with some early successes. Purple Elephant Productions secured a grant of £10,000 from the Lottery 'Celebrate' fund towards next year's Children's Festival and £4000 from the Community Foundation and Sportivate. Shared Earth Learning have received a grant of £500 from Greggs Foundation and £1000 from the Postcode Lottery. Others are waiting to hear the outcome of their bids which range from £200 - £45k.

Feedback from recipients of the advice and support has been mainly positive, particularly on the model of creating a case for support, which includes template of narrative, evidence of need and budgets that can be cut and pasted into various forms and letters of request.

Issues arising during this contract period include:

1. Louise not being local to Frome has pros and cons. On the plus side, she comes with no preconceptions or allegiances. However, the fact that she is not known and groups need to come through the Town Council to access her advice could still be a barrier for some people. It has been noted that those who are perhaps most motivated and determined to raise funds and move their organisations forward have seemed undaunted and navigated the process easily. Whilst most groups are happy to work with Louise remotely, others have said it would be easier if the support was more readily available on an ad hoc basis.
2. Louise's local knowledge is limited, and, therefore, she may not see connections, synergies and duplications that someone local might spot. She says, 'I have at times felt as though my service is something of a 'bolt on' to a broader scheme of support rather than being part of a coherent programme.' Community Projects Officers and Louise are working to improve communication.
3. Capacity: as new clients come forward, Louise's 'caseload' grows. Just because someone receives advice does not mean they will then be able to conduct a successful fundraising campaign without further support. In fact, the majority do need some form of hand-holding on-going. Working only 2.5 days a month's means that Louise regularly needs to remind herself of the case in order to provide the next piece of support. Of the eleven organisations that have so far engaged with the process, four no longer appear to need/want help and at least one has chosen to use local advisors. Another four require relatively light-touch support. The current 'active' caseload of seven includes three groups who are in crisis and/or require a lot of support to become application-ready. They may well need more intensive support than Louise is able to provide.
4. Some groups have decided that they need more support than Louise is able to provide and have successfully used support from local fundraisers. This is to be welcomed.

Conclusion

Based on the objectives set out in February 2016, the terms of the contract and feedback from users of the service the contract has been successfully delivered in year 1. We

anticipate more grants in year 2 as more applications that are in the pipeline are considered. We are confident that Louise will continue to make good progress in supporting local groups to become grant ready. Through regular updates and contract meetings we will continue to review and consider how to address the issues above.

Discussion - additional £10k for 'in house' fundraising support.

In the 2017/18 budget, there is an allocation of £10k to support fundraising for Frome Town Council projects and initiatives. It is intended that this will enable FTC to respond both proactively to issues in the town and react in a timely manner to new funding streams as they arise.

This budget could be used in a number of ways and it would be helpful if the discussion provides us with a steer. These ways include:

- a. having a bank of experienced fundraisers on hand which FTC could call on for specific bids according to areas of expertise
- b. recruiting a part time post of fundraiser
- c. contracting a fundraiser in a similar way to Louise.

There may also be other suggestions.