

Agenda item 7

For decision - Sea Change fund and Substantial Grants Fund

Author: Kate Hellard, Community Development Manager

Summary

This paper has been written with the grants advisory group and proposes the development of two new grant funds for the years 2020 – 23.

It is recommended that a Sea Change fund, which would offer multi-year funding alongside a comprehensive support package and an annual Substantial Grant Fund are introduced. It is proposed that the Community Development Manager, in consultation with the Grant Advisory group updates the terms and conditions of the Community Grants Fund and the Mayor's Grant to bring them in line with the two new grant funds.

Background

Frome Town Council recognises the vital role of community organisations in Frome; the wide range of services and opportunities they offer, the support, advice and practical help they provide residents and that they continue to rise to the challenges of increasing demand for their services as the local statutory services are effected by austerity.

FTC has a commitment to supporting these services through, amongst other things, a portfolio of funding mechanisms for local organisations, which includes: the mayor's grant, community grants, PB Events and multi-year agreements.

In June, the Town Matters Committee asked the Grants Advisory Group to review multi-year agreements.

Multi-year agreements were introduced in 2017 to provide clarity with medium-term financial planning for both FTC and the recipient of the grant. The recipient would also be able to use FTC grant to assist with raising other funding through match funding. The criteria and conditions of the grant were:

- a. The organisation should be properly constituted and have its own bank account
- b. It should be not for profit
- c. Financial need over the period of the grant should be demonstrated
- d. How the funding will be used should be clearly stated
- e. There should be clear evidence that the activities will help meet the Council's strategic objectives and the benefits should be measurable with clear targets
- f. The maximum period of an agreement should be three years.

There are currently nine multi-year agreements, each with a three year term, that were awarded in 2017 to Active and In Touch, Mendip Health Connections, Fair Frome, CAB, YMCA Mendip, Frome Festival, Frome Carnival, Frome Community Education and Purple

Elephant. A tenth - Harry's Hydro – was agreed over a longer term. These grants total £94k pa and the three year agreements come to an end in March 2020.

Discussion

The Grants Advisory Group have reviewed how the current grants process work and are looking to bring all of the funding streams in line with the objective that projects will come forward for funding which further support Frome Town Council's aspirations to build:

- A positive and inclusive town where no one gets left behind
- A clean, healthy and happy town
- A thriving and resilient community and local economy
- A town that actively encourages local people to participate in and feel ownership over ideas, spaces and assets
- A town which embraces innovation, takes risks, celebrates its successes and learns from its experiences.

1. The Sea Change Fund

The Grants Advisory Group have met to review how multi-year agreements are developed over the coming year and propose that the fund is remodelled to support organisations looking to make a step change in their business and organisational model. This fund will be called the Sea Change Fund.

The aim is to provide not for profit organisations such as Charities and CIC's tapered multi year funding alongside a programme of support and advice in order to develop robust and fit for purpose projects which benefit the residents of Frome.

It is intended that this funding will create a 'multiplier' effect, enabling organisations to use FTC funding as match funding for new and existing projects from a range of other funding mechanisms.

This funding will come with a wider package of support for new and growing organisations in order that they can build a sustainable approach to securing a stable future independent of FTC funding. They will be offered intensive support in a range of areas for example; to develop a business plan; a fundraising plan; and with budgeting and monitoring processes.

We expect to see projects come forward which; Strengthen community cohesion, Demonstrate economic benefit, Utilise social capital, And where possible, focus on prevention in order to create long lasting change.

Organisations may apply to the Sea Change fund to support the delivery of new ideas or the development of existing projects. Applications will be invited in May and October. They will be shortlisted and selected by the Grants Advisory Group which will make recommendations to the Town Matters Committee. It is anticipated that the application process itself will be simple and straightforward, allowing organisations to present their ideas and the support they require in innovative and accessible ways. For example, through the use of multimedia, digital and or written application, enabling them to bring their projects to life.

2. Substantial Grant fund.

It is proposed that alongside the 'Sea Change' fund a new large grant fund is introduced. Application to the new Substantial Grant fund will be considered once a year and will close to applications in January. Organisations, including existing multi-year agreement recipients, will be able to apply for a grant of up to £8k for projects benefiting Frome residents. If Council approves, it is proposed that this fund is launched immediately so that decisions are made before March 2020 to help local organisations plan for the year ahead.

Applicants will be asked to demonstrate both community and financial need. They will also be asked to describe the benefits of the funding to Frome residents and tell us how they intend to monitor the grant. Full details of the terms and conditions proposed for this fund are attached in Appendix 1.

Organisations applying to this grant fund will be encouraged to apply online through the FTC website, where they will also have the opportunity to upload supporting information by way of a short film, photos and or a sound recording in order to bring their application to life.

The Grants Advisory Group will meet to shortlist and discuss applications using the criteria as the basis for scoring which will inform the discussion and subsequent decision making. Their recommendations will be presented at Town Matters for approval.

It is proposed that the budget for Substantial Grant fund is £50k and the Sea Change fund is £40k leaving, £8k to honour the historical agreement with Harry's Hydro. This is £4k more than the current multi-year agreement budget.

Community Grants

In order to reflect the proposed strategy and in line with the changes above, the Grants Advisory Group will review the terms and conditions of Community Grants (£300 - £2k) and Mayor's Grants (up to £300) in due course.

The group are keen to ensure that support and advice for applicants is readily available to support new and emerging groups and that the various levels of funding are reflected in the application process.

Budgets

The proposed budgets for 2010/21 for the four funding streams are in the table below. The total cost of the four funds for 2020/21 is proposed to be £9k more than the current grants budget.

Substantial Grant Fund	£50k
The Sea Change Fund	£40k
Community Grant Fund	£25k
Mayor's Grant Fund	£5k

Recommendations

1. Agree the introduction of the Sea Change and Substantial Grant funds
2. Approve the terms and conditions in Appendix 1 for the Substantial Grant fund.
3. Delegate to the Community Development Manager in consultation with the Grants Advisory Group to establish the terms and conditions for the Sea Change and review those for the Community Grants fund and the Mayor's Grant fund.
4. Delegate authority to the Community Development Manager in consultation with the Grants Advisory Group to manage the application process for all grant funds in line with their respective terms, conditions and criteria and to make grant recommendations to the Town Matters Committee throughout the year.
5. To agree to allocate funding for 2020/21 as follows:

Substantial Grant Fund	£50k
The Sea Change Fund	£40k
Community Grant Fund	£25k
Mayor's Grant Fund	£5k