

**ST EDMUNDSBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**GRANT WORKING PARTY**

**(Formerly the Grant Panel)**

**Minutes of a meeting held on Tuesday 7 December 2010 at 5.00 pm  
in Room GFR14, West Suffolk House,  
Western Way, Bury St Edmunds**

PRESENT: Councillor Mrs S O Broughton (Chairman)  
Councillors Aitkens, Clifton-Brown, Nettleton, Spicer (substituting  
for Hale), Thorndyke and Turner

**17. Substitute**

The following substitution was declared:-

Councillor Spicer for Councillor Hale.

**18. Apology for Absence**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Hale.

**19. Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 7 September 2010 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**20. Declarations of Interests**

Members' declarations of interests are recorded under the item to which the declaration relates.

**21. Rural Areas Community Initiatives Fund: Application for Project Funding: 2010/2011**

The Panel considered Report B359 (previously circulated), which provided details of an application received from Stanton Football Club under the criteria of the Rural Areas Community Initiatives Fund.

Attached as Appendix A to the Report were financial details of the Rural Areas Community Initiatives Fund (RACIF). The current budget available for allocation was £22,177.

An application had been received from Stanton Football Club within two weeks of preparing the Reports for the meeting of the Working Party. In accordance with the Council's Grants Policy, this application was not considered by the usual email voting system and instead was presented as a Report for consideration by the Working Party.

The Football Club wished to obtain a grant to purchase a good quality, second hand 'Compact Tractor Flail Mower and Front Loader', as their current household ride-on mower, which was twelve years old, had now ceased to function. The Club required a mower that was able to cut the pitch when necessary, plus fertilise and roll the pitch.

The cost of the mower was £2,975 and the Football Club had sought funding from other sources together with being able to allocate £500 from its own funds, which was highlighted in the Grant Scoring Matrix attached as Appendix B.

The Working Party supported the application, but a discussion was held on the process for enabling the release of the grants to the applicants when applications were considered at Grant Working Party meetings. It was the custom and practice that decisions on RACIF grants made at meetings of the Working Party were referred to the Cabinet for ratification, which was in contrast to those determined under the email voting procedure detailed in the Grants Policy. However, the Working Party considered that a prompt decision was required in this case to secure the second hand mower, which was being purchased from a popular online auction website. Therefore, the officers were asked to seek clarification as to whether the existing Grants Policy allowed the grant to be awarded immediately following the meeting using officer delegated powers or whether the Chief Executive's Urgency Powers, as detailed in Part 3 of the Constitution, would need to be exercised in this instance.

RESOLVED:-

That, subject to seeking clarification that delegated authority was already provided in the existing Grants Policy, the officers be authorised to award a grant of £675 to Stanton Football Club towards the purchase of a football pitch mower, as outlined in Section 3 of Report B359.

*(Subsequent to the meeting it was clarified that the existing Grants Policy already authorised the officers to award RACIF grants based on the vote of the Grant Working Party at the relevant meeting.)*

## **22. Recreation, Village Halls and Play Scheme Grants: Applications for Project Funding: 2010/2011**

The Working Party considered Report B360 (previously circulated), which provided details of recent applications in order that recommendations could be made to the Cabinet as to the level of funding and associated issues.

Two grant applications had been received under the Recreation, Village Halls and Play Scheme (Capital) Grants Scheme, and details of individual allocations in respect of this Grant Scheme awarded since 2004/2005 were contained in Appendix A attached the Report. Information in Appendix A also indicated that the current budget available for allocation from the Recreation, Village Halls and Play Scheme Grants Scheme was £24,448 taking into consideration all committed and drawn funds since the last meeting of the Working Party on 7 September 2010.

Great Barton Scout Group had successfully completed Phase One of renovating its Scout Hut, but now wished to embark on Phase Two which would involve insulating the roof and two walls, replacing and re-wiring heaters and lighting and refurbishing the toilets and kitchen. A Grant Scoring Matrix in respect of this application was attached as Appendix B to the Report.

An application had also been received from 1<sup>st</sup> Horringer Scout Group which stated that its existing Scout Hut was in poor condition, therefore it wished to demolish the hut and remove an adjacent storage unit to build a new eco-friendly purpose built facility. The storage unit had only been granted temporary planning consent and it was likely that this would not be renewed. The Group aimed to replace both the existing scout hut and storage unit with an environmentally sustainable single storey building, using 'straw bale' construction techniques. A Grant Scoring Matrix in respect of this application was attached as Appendix C to the report.

The officers tabled a copy of a newspaper article published in the East Anglian Daily Times on 7 December 2010, which reported that £25,000 match funding had been granted to the Scout Group from The Suffolk Foundation's 'Creating the Greenest County Fund'. The Chairman commended the officers for providing details of the allocation by The Suffolk Foundation to the Group as a possible source of match funding. During the discussion the Working Party considered it appropriate for the Chairman to contact the local press directly to obtain media coverage on this particular project to raise the profile of the grant awarded by the Borough Council.



**RECOMMENDED:- That**

- (1) a grant of £4,000 be awarded to Great Barton Scout Group, as detailed in Appendix B to Report B360, towards the cost of renovating and upgrading their scout hut; and**
- (2) a grant of £5,000 be awarded to 1<sup>st</sup> Horringer Scout Group, as detailed in Appendix C to Report B360, towards the cost of constructing a new eco-friendly scout hut in Horringer.**

**RESOLVED:-**

That, the Chairman contact local press to raise the profile of the grant awarded by the Borough Council in respect of the project being undertaken by 1<sup>st</sup> Horringer Scout Group.

**23. Stansfield Village Hall Management Committee**

The Working Party received and noted Report B361 (previously circulated), which provided an update on the spending of a grant previously awarded to Stansfield Village Hall Management Committee in 2008.

On 7 September 2010, the Working Party considered a grant application submitted by Stansfield Village Hall Management Committee. During the discussion at that meeting, Members queried why the work detailed in a previous application submitted by the Management Committee in August 2008 had not been undertaken in Phase 1 of the development. It had been intended for the floor to be replaced in the main hall; however, it had transpired that other works had been carried out, which were considered to be more urgent. The officers had revisited the village hall and met the Chairman of the Management Committee to discuss the issues raised by the Working Party.

It had been anticipated that the main hall would be refurbished first; however, the Management Committee's architect had undertaken a thorough inspection of the whole building and discovered that the bar area and meeting room was in more urgent need of attention. It was perhaps misleading to describe in the original application that the *'floors in the building were dangerous when wet'*. They were actually made of painted chipboard, which could become slippery but to mitigate this, the Management Committee had placed a number of large mats at each entrance to ensure as much precipitation was kept outside the hall as possible. To replace the main hall floor involved re-configuring the layout of all the remaining areas of the building and until substantial funding was raised in a later phase of the refurbishment project, the Management Committee carefully monitored any potential health and safety issues connected with this issue.

The Council had awarded a £10,000 grant in 2008 for Phase One of the refurbishment scheme, which had not financed the project as detailed in the initial application, it had been used to support the refurbishment of the bar area and meeting room and met the match funding criteria.

The officers tabled photographs of the newly refurbished bar area and meeting room, which were noted by the Working Party. In addition, Members noted that as part of the review of the Grants Policy, as detailed in Minute 24 below, it was proposed to include reference in the Policy requiring that any significant deviations from the original application would need to be referred back to the Council.

#### **24. Amendments to the Grants Policy**

The Working Party considered Report B362 (previously circulated), which sought approval for a number of amendments to the Council's adopted Grants Policy.

Following the withdrawal of the Arts Grants and the Hall Hire discount grants, it was necessary to amend the Grants Policy to address these changes. This also presented an opportunity to insert and delete additional clauses to clarify and highlight the Council's current position. The proposed amendments were annotated on the existing Grants Policy, attached as Appendix A to Report B362, which were supported by the Working Party. However, as it had been previously highlighted during the discussion of Report B359, 'Rural Area Community Initiatives Fund: Application for Project Funding: 2010/2011' (Minute 21 above referred), it was considered appropriate to refine the wording in the Grants Policy relating to the determination of grants awarded under the criteria of the Rural Area Community Initiatives Fund. A number of additional amendments were proposed and supported by the Working Party, as detailed in the recommendations to the Cabinet and full Council below.



***RECOMMENDED:- That, subject to the approval of full Council:-***

- (1) the amendments to the Grants Policy, as annotated in Appendix A to Report B362, be approved, as amended to incorporate the following additional changes:-***
  - (a) Section 7 Table: under the Rural Area Community Initiatives heading, reference to '...or the Grant Working Party recommends to Cabinet' be deleted;***
  - (b) Section 9.2: the following sentence be amended to read, 'If there is not a majority in favour of awarding the grant, the application will be referred to the next available meeting of the Grant Working Party for determination';***
  - (c) Section 10.1: the terms of reference of the Grant Working Party be amended to read, 'To consider grant applications and recommend the level of grants payable to organisations to officers or the Cabinet, based on the policies agreed by Council and in accordance with the relevant delegations detailed in Section 7 of this Grants Policy';***

- (d) Section 1.10 of Appendix A to the Policy: the following sentence be amended to read, 'Consultations that arise within ten working days of a scheduled Grant Working Party meeting will be considered and voted upon at the meeting and not via the email system';*
- (e) Section 1.13 of Appendix A to the Policy: this entire paragraph be deleted and subsequent paragraphs be renumbered accordingly; and*
- (2) the Corporate Director for Community, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder with responsibility for grants, be authorised to make minor typographic, grammatical and/or factual changes.*

## **25. Grants to Voluntary Organisations: 2011/2012**

The Working Party considered Report B363 (previously circulated), which sought approval for the allocation of a range of grants to voluntary organisations for the 2011/2012 financial year.

In light of the Government's recent Comprehensive Spending Review and the implications of spending cuts within local councils, the overall approach had broadly been to recommend a reduction of ten percent in grants awarded to external organisations to achieve the level of savings required by the Council, as considered by the Policy Development Committee on 24 November 2010 (Report B313 referred).

The Working Party noted that with the anticipated transfer of Southgate Community Centre to the Southgate Community Partnership on 1 April 2011, the grant awarded to Council-owned community centres would reduce to £25,920 to cover the three remaining locally-managed centres in the Borough. This amount equated to meeting the rents totalling £16,650, which was repayable to the Borough Council, and a reduction of ten percent for the cleaning, renewables and maintenance element of the grant, amounting to £9,270. Whilst Members considered the grant should be awarded, it was also felt to be important that the management committees for the three remaining centres were aware that the grant would be likely to be reduced further in future years. Furthermore, it remained the Borough Council's aspiration that all community centres should be in the ownership of the local community. However, the Working Party acknowledged that support would be needed from the Borough Council to ensure the centres remained viable and continued to thrive during the transition period.

Attached as Appendix A to the Report was a summary of the applications received for Core Funding for 2011/2012, including those with funding agreements which expired in 2012/2013. Six other applications for Core Funding were listed in the second half of the table and these were also considered at this meeting. Four of these applications were detailed in separate reports contained elsewhere on the agenda.

The Working Party agreed that the grants previously approved for 2011/2012 as part of funding agreements and detailed in Appendix A, should be honoured in full. But given the emerging situation regarding the savings required from Council budgets, and with the Borough Council's elections being held in 2011 (at which time a new administration may wish to review how grants are awarded), Members considered it prudent that grants previously approved for 2012/2013 should be reviewed and reconsidered when the process for determining core funding grants for the 2012/2013 financial year was undertaken.

As only one application had been received for a grant to enter the 2011 'In Bloom' competition, the existing budget of £4,000 had been recommended to be reduced to £2,925 for the 2011/2012 financial year. The Working Party considered this budget to be acceptable; however, further discussion was held on the application itself during consideration of Report B364 (Minute 26 below referred).

A grant of £1,000 was awarded in 2010/2011 to West Suffolk Cruse Bereavement Care; however, in order to meet the Council's requirements of awarding a ten percent reduction in the level of grant awarded to external organisations, this grant had been recommended for a reduced grant of £900. This was supported by the Working Party.

Some concern was expressed by Members regarding the award of £5,000 to Haverhill Association of Voluntary Organisations (HAVO), principally because the future viability of this organisation was uncertain, and a query was raised as to whether this organisation should merge with the Haverhill Volunteer Centre. In response, the officers explained that this was a matter for local determination and that HAVO principally provided infrastructure support to the voluntary sector in Haverhill. Furthermore, the grant recommended would cover rent and business rate costs, which were repayable to the Borough Council. No direct revenue support would be provided under the proposal. Having taken this information into consideration the majority of Members considered the grant of £5,000 should be awarded.



**RECOMMENDED:- That**

**(1) the previously approved core funding commitments for 2011/2012, as detailed in Appendix A to Report B363, be honoured in full, but with the following caveat:-**

**(a) those organisations previously awarded funding commitments up to 2012/2013 be given 12 months' notice that their current grant will be reviewed and reconsidered when the process for determining core funding grant applications for the 2012/2013 financial year is undertaken;**

**(2) subject to the budget setting process, the following grants be awarded in 2011/2012:-**

	£
<b>Total Community Centres Budget</b>	<b>25,920</b>
<b>Total 'In Bloom' Grant Budget</b>	<b>2,925</b>
<b>West Suffolk Cruse Bereavement Care</b>	<b>900</b>
<b>Haverhill Association of Voluntary Organisations</b>	<b>5,000</b>

*(Councillor Nettleton wished it to be recorded that he voted against the awarding of the grant to the Haverhill Association of Voluntary Organisations.)*

*(Councillor Aitkens left the meeting at the conclusion of this item.)*

## **26. Grants to Anglia in Bloom: 2011/2012**

The Working Party considered Report B364 (previously circulated), which provided details of a grant application for financial assistance under the criteria of the 'In Bloom' Grant Funding Scheme.

The Borough Council had historically supported two rural groups to enter the Anglia in Bloom competition. Funding for rural 'In Bloom' entrants was provided as it was considered likely that the organisations would not survive without some level of financial support. For 2010/2011, £4,000 had been allocated towards funding the 'In Bloom' competition in rural areas; however, following the decision of Cavendish in Colour not to enter the 2011 competition, it had been recommended by the Working Party during the consideration of Report B363 at this meeting that the budget for 2011/2012 be reduced to £2,925 (Minute 25 above referred).

An application had been received from Clare in Bloom to support its entry to the Anglia in Bloom competition 2011. The applicant had requested £3,250 and a Grant Scoring Matrix in respect of this application was attached as Appendix A to the Report. In accordance with the overall approach of the Council to reduce grants awarded to external organisations by ten percent, a grant of £2,925 had been recommended to be awarded to Clare in Bloom.

A detailed discussion was held on the merits of the application and some concern was expressed that the grant previously awarded in 2010/2011 had not been fully utilised. In response to a question, the Working Party was informed that Clare in Bloom had a balance of £3,971 which would presumably be carried over and allocated towards entering the competition in 2011. Members therefore, considered whether a grant was required for 2011/2012 and wished to defer consideration of the application to enable the officers to obtain a detailed breakdown on the items in which the funding awarded in previous years had been allocated, including obtaining information from the Ward Member which may provide some further background into how the money was spent.

The Working Party was advised that should it wish to defer consideration of the application until its next meeting on 8 March 2011, Members could only award a grant of up to £2,925 as the budget for the 'In Bloom Grant Scheme' had already been recommended for approval (Minute 25 above referred) and would be determined by full Council on 1 March 2011 as part of the budget setting process.

RESOLVED:-

That consideration of the 'In Bloom' grant to Clare in Bloom be deferred to the next meeting of the Working Party on 8 March 2011 to enable the officers to obtain further information from the applicant.

## **27. Applications for Core Funding: Citizens' Advice Bureaux in St Edmundsbury: 2011/2012**

*(Councillor Spicer declared a personal interest as one of the Borough Council's nominated representatives on the Bury St Edmunds and District Citizens Advice Bureau and remained in the meeting for the consideration of this item. He provided background information to the application but did not vote on the item.)*

The Working Party considered Report B365 (previously circulated), which sought approval for the allocation of a combined amount to the Bury St Edmunds and District Citizens' Advice Bureau (CAB) and Haverhill and District CAB for the 2011/2012 financial year.

There were two Citizens' Advice Bureaux (CABx) within St Edmundsbury, one located in Bury St Edmunds and the other in Haverhill. These CABx were currently individual charities each operated by a Board of Trustees. The objective of the Citizens' Advice Service was to provide free, confidential, impartial and independent advice to support local residents with a wide range of issues. In 2010/2011, Bury St Edmunds and District CAB received a grant of £95,500 and Haverhill and District CAB received £106,500.

During 2010, the Trustees of both CABx had worked with other local CABx to form the West Suffolk Citizens' Advice Bureau (WSCAB) which was positioned above the individual CABx in Bury St Edmunds, Haverhill, Brandon and Mildenhall, Sudbury and Newmarket. It was anticipated that some savings would result from this federation in areas such as training and the development of resources. In addition to the WSCAB federation, Bury St Edmunds and District CAB and Haverhill and District CAB, which were two separate legal entities, planned to amalgamate with the Mildenhall and Brandon CAB. The target date for this full merger was the end of March 2011. Although two separate applications had been received by the Borough Council and provided the anticipated merger of the two Bureaux took place on 1 April 2011, it was proposed that the grant be paid as one amount. It would then be for the Trustees and Management Committee to allocate the funds appropriately. As referred to in Minute 25 above and to meet the Council's target savings from grants to external organisations, a ten percent reduction in the combined amount had been recommended. New clauses were to be appended to the Service Level Agreement to ensure that the Borough Council funding was used to provide services within St Edmundsbury only and not within the other branch of the merged Bureaux.

Councillor Nettleton suggested that, as an incentive to ensure the merger was completed by 1 April 2011, the second recommendation contained in Section 6.1 of Report B365 should be amended to require that the Bureaux would receive lesser amounts of £80,000 for the Bury St Edmunds and District CAB and £90,000 for the Haverhill and District CAB, should they remain operating individually at 1 April 2011. He also suggested that the proposed recommendations contained in Section 6.1 (2)(b) and (c) be omitted, as deletion of these would also provide further encouragement to the applicants to complete the merger as planned. This proposal was supported by the Working Party.



**RECOMMENDED:- That**

- (1) subject to the budget setting process and assuming that the anticipated merger of the two Bureaux takes place with effect from 1 April 2011, a combined core funding grant of £181,800, as outlined in Section 5.2 of Report B365, be awarded for 2011/2012 to the newly formed joint Bureaux for the provision of advice services within St Edmundsbury; and**
- (2) in the event that the Trustees are unable to effect the merger by 1 April 2011, individual grants of £80,000 be awarded to Bury St Edmunds and District Citizens' Advice Bureau (CAB) and £90,000 to Haverhill and District CAB for 2011/2012.**



**28. Application for Core Funding: Victory Sports Ground (Bury St Edmunds) Limited: 2011/2012**

The Working Party considered Report B366 (previously circulated), which sought approval for a grant to be awarded to the Victory Sports Ground (Bury St Edmunds) Limited (VSGL) for the 2011/2012 financial year.

Victory Sports Ground was a high quality multi-activity sports ground comprising two grass cricket wickets (one of County standard), an artificial croquet surface, two hard and two grass tennis courts and football pitches. It was the home facility of the Bury St Edmunds Cricket Club, Victory Ground Tennis Club, Bury St Edmunds Croquet Club and hosted annually a nationally renowned junior tennis tournament.

In 2001, the management of the Victory Sports Ground was transferred to a new company, VSGL. At the time of the transfer, the revenue cost to the Council was £96,000; however this funding had reduced over the years and in 2010/2011, the organisation was awarded a core funding grant of £45,000. VSGL collected rents from the clubs using the facilities and currently paid the Council £11,450 per annum in rent.

On 21 October 2009 (Minute 72 referred) the Cabinet approved a joint project with VSGL, the adjacent independent South Lee School and Bury St Edmunds Cricket Club. In summary, the new facilities project proposed that the existing pavilion and changing rooms would be replaced by a new sports hall and pavilion. The revenue costs of operating the new sports hall would be met by South Lee School. Officers had held regular discussions with representatives of VSGL regarding the revenue grant and it was proposed that the Council, in partnership with VSGL, would seek as part of the wider project to reduce the Council's grant. However, whilst the project, which had greater revenue generation possibilities for the Victory Ground site than was possible at present was being developed, it was proposed that the grant should be maintained at its current level for 2011/2012.

The officers tabled an artistic impression of the proposed new facilities for Members to examine; however, this was not yet available in the public domain.

In response to a question regarding the leasehold and covenants on the Victory Sports Ground, the Working Party was informed that a written reply would be circulated following the meeting.

The Panel supported the awarding of £45,000 core funding to VSGL in 2011/2012 and subsequently it was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED:-

That under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12(A) of the Act.

During private session, the Working Party considered the artistic impression of the facility in more detail and the officers responded to questions raised. Members were advised that the proposal had been worked up by South Lee School and the plans were indicative only.



**RECOMMENDED:- That**

***That, subject to the budget setting process, a grant of £45,000 be awarded to Victory Sports Ground (Bury St Edmunds) Limited for the 2011/2012 financial year.***

*(At this point, the meeting was resumed in public session.)*

**29. Dates of Future Meetings**

The Working Party confirmed that future meetings in 2011 would be held on:-

8 March;  
7 June;  
6 September;  
15 November; and  
6 December.

All meetings would be held on Tuesdays commencing at 5.00 pm.

The meeting concluded at 6.58 pm.

**MRS S O BROUGHTON  
CHAIRMAN**