

## Rother District Council

Report to	-	Cabinet
Date	-	9 March 2020
Report of the	-	Executive Director
Subject	-	Community Grant Scheme – Round 2

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### Recommendation: It be **RESOLVED**: That:

- 1) the community grants listed at paragraph 7 of the report as recommended by the Grants Panel be approved, subject to specific conditions relating to each application; and
  - 2) to finance the over commitment by one of the options in paragraph 12.
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**Head of Service: Ben Hook**

**Lead Cabinet Member: Councillor Prochak**

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### Introduction

1. The Council's Community Grant Scheme (CGS) makes provision for up to £130,000 per annum to be made available to community groups or organisations that meet the grant criteria of the Rother District Council (RDC) CGS, as agreed by Cabinet in 2013 (Minute CB12/120 refers).

### Budget Position

2. A total of £67,541 was awarded during Round 1 of the CGS. A further £500 has been awarded through the Small Grants Scheme (SGS) (See Appendix 3).
3. The Council agreed to ring-fence £10,000 for small grants for VE (8 May 2020) commemorative / celebratory events (Minute CB19/42 refers), and £40,000 for Healthy Aging and Innovation in Rural Europe (HAIRE) project match funding (Minute CB19/41 refers), £15,000 of which would be committed from the 2019-20 budget.
4. This leaves a total of £36,959 for Round 2 of the CGS, as set out below:

Budget for 2019-20	£130,000
Amount awarded during Round 1:	£67,541
Amount awarded through Small Grants Scheme:	£500
Amount ring-fenced for VE events	£10,000
Amount committed Year 1 HAIRE project	£15,000
Total awarded/committed:	<u>£93,041.00</u>
Remaining budget for Round 2, 2019-20:	<b>£36,959</b>

5. The Community Grant Panel had been instructed to assess and recommend each application based on its merits rather than the budget position. This was due to the reduction in the budget created by the VE events ring-fencing and HAIRE project commitment and an agreement from the Leader that applicants should not be penalised as a result. The CGS budget sits within the Council's approved Capital Programme and any overspend during this round will be offset against slippage from other capital projects.

### Community Grants

6. Round 2 of the CGS for 2019-20 closed on 15 January 2020. A total of eleven applications were received, one of which did not meet the scheme criteria and was discounted.
7. Cabinet is asked to consider the applications at Appendix 1 (a summary of each is set out below):

Applicant	Panel Recommend	Applicant Request
Battle Community Singers	£1,400	£1,400
Battle Memorial Hall	£4,000	£4,000
Camber Parish Council	£29,340	£29,340
Hastings & Rother Furniture Service	£7,350	£11,500
Robertsbridge Cricket Club	£10,000	£10,000
Stonegate Village Hall	£6,000	£6,000
St James The Great Church	£5,000	£5,000
Strandliners	£877	£877
The Archive Resource Centre, Pett Village Hall	£3,000	£3,000
The Camber Memorial Hall	£5,000	£5,000
	<b>£71,967</b>	£76,117
Battle Local Action Planning Group	£5,000	£5,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>£76,967</b>	£81,117

Table1: Applications, recommendations, applicant requests: CSG Round 2, 2019-20

8. Additionally, a request was received from Battle Local Action Planning Group (BLAPG) for the remaining £5,000 shortfall in their previous request for £30,000 to support the delivery of a healthy walk/cycle pathway at Battle Recreation Ground. Cabinet had previously agreed a reduced award of £25,000 (Minute CB18/78 refers) with a proviso that the applicant could apply for the remaining £5,000 during Round 1 of 2019/2020 CGS if they were still short of funding for the project. BLAPG has since sent in this request together with a project update and timeline. The details of the project as previously reported to Cabinet is attached at Appendix 2.
9. Should Cabinet agree with the Panel's recommendation to award the applications above, and the additional award to BLAPG, then this will result in a maximum of £76,967 being awarded in Round 2. For this financial year the total amount committed from the overall budget of £130,000 will be £171,008. This will result in an overspend of £41,008. Members are reminded that the SGS remains open and therefore opportunities for community groups to submit an application during this financial year are still available.

10. Members are reminded that conditions are applied when awarding the grants which include that full funding is obtained in advance of any Rother payments being made and that RDC is acknowledged in any publicity and promotional material associated with these projects. Other specific conditions will also be applied to grants as appropriate.

### **Hastings & Rother Furniture Service**

11. Elements of the project breakdown provided by Hastings & Rother Furniture Service did not meet the scheme criteria; the Panel agreed to recommend match funding for the elements of the project that meet the criteria and this has resulted in the recommendation of a reduced award, as set out in Table 1 above.
12. If Cabinet approve the list of grants as presented in Appendix 1 then this will over commit the CGS Capital Programme provision for this year. Previously, Members agreed to not cap the current award fund following approval for the HAIRE Project and therefore, the shortfall in funding will need to be met from reserves. Members could reduce the 2020-21 Capital Programme provision by the amount of overspend if all projects in this report are approved. Alternatively, Members could consider the following:
  - i. Reduce each application by an equal percentage to come within budget.
  - ii. Defer some grant applications until the next round.
  - iii. Approve all applications and reduce the available community grants for FY20/21 and only have one round of community grants.
  - iv. Fund the shortfall from reserves.

### **Future of Community Grants**

13. Members have indicated that they may like to review the CGS and whether it could for example be superseded by either a local lottery, use of local Community Infrastructure Levy money or crowd funding. If Members are minded to review the community grants then it is suggested the Panel are best placed to make recommendations to Cabinet.

### **Conclusion**

14. Members are requested to consider the Panel's recommendations, set out at paragraph 7 above, with summaries of the applications attached at Appendix 1, mindful of the clear benefits these offer to their communities.
15. The CGS offers a robust assessment process that benefits communities applying for grants, and secures considerable additional value for money benefits for the Council.

Dr Anthony Leonard  
Executive Director

### **Risk Assessment Statement**

The assessment and monitoring system for community grants will mitigate much of the financial and reputational risks associated with handing over grant finance. The Council attaches specific conditions to grant applications to mitigate risk. Nonetheless, we are often in the hands of voluntary groups as to the amount of time, effort and other financial support that they can commit to their projects. This is mitigated by the good working relationships that exist across the district.

**COMMUNITY GRANTS – ROUND 2, FINANCIAL YEAR: 2019/20****1. Battle Community Singers**Applicant and Grant Request Details

Battle Community Singers (BCS) were founded in 2015 as an all-inclusive, non-profit making local group who enjoy meeting together to sing and socialise. The group support those with a wide range of challenges including physical and mental health issues.

BCS are seeking an award to support in the cost of the following:

- Coach travel to Stratford to take part in the National Community Choirs Festival.
- Conductors' staging and trolley, for use at local concerts.
- The cost of copywrite sheet music.

Benefits

Members of the BCS will benefit directly, however the project will encourage others in the community to join and benefit from an 'enriching, engaging and uplifting experience'

Other Funding Sources

BCS are part funding the project and have an application in with Battle Town Council (BTC). The outcome of the BTC application will not be known until after 28 January.

Project Sustainability

BCS has been running for almost five years. The Conductors staging and trolley will enable more local concerts to take place. The equipment will be maintained by the group.

Support for the Project

Written support has been received by:

- Rotary Club of Battle
- Battle Festival
- Optivo
- BTC (funding support to be confirmed)
- Ward Councillor support from Councillors Mrs Cook and Field

Panel Comments and Recommendation

There was some concern about funding being sought for coach travel as part of this project, however, agreement that this element of the project is about raising the profile of the group in order to attract a larger local membership.

Recommend an award of £1,400 on the condition that evidence is provided of funding from the BTC (to be confirmed following BTC meeting on Tuesday 28 January).

## 2. **Battle Memorial Hall**

### Applicant and Grant Request Details

Battle Memorial Hall is requesting a grant for the replacement of projector equipment and screen which are nearing the end of their useful life and which are used for a community cinema.

### Benefits

The initiative to hold monthly film shows was taken some time ago as part of a scheme to raise sufficient funds to install tiered seating in the main hall. Although the scheme was successful and the project completed, the popularity of the film shows was such that requests were made by many attendees to continue with the arrangement. Poor bus services and difficulties for some people accessing a cinema if they have to travel, has led to a sense of isolation and for them the cinema evening has become a regular date. Films specifically for children are also now shown and organisations such as the Battle Festival make use of the equipment. However, the quality of the shows has been decreasing as the projector has become aged and the small size screen needs to be enlarged.

### Other Funding Sources

Funding has been received from:

- Battle Muffin Club
- Battle Rotary Club
- Battle Town Council (BTC)
- Donations

### Support for the Project

The project has the support of Ward Members Councillors Dixon and Field. BTC also supports the project with funding of £500.

### Panel Comments and Recommendation

The Panel raised concerns about whether the venue was properly licensed to show films and felt that the ticket prices should be realistic to ensure that equipment can be maintained.

Recommend an award of £4,000 on the condition that evidence is provided showing that the project is licence compliant.

## 3. **Camber Parish Council**

### Applicant and Grant Request Details

The grant will be used to deliver Phase 2 of the Jubilee Green enhancement project to provide a sympathetically designed play area to sit adjacent to the recently completed Phase 1 project to complete a landscaped space for local people and visitors to enjoy. Phase 1 (which also received community grant funding) used reclaimed beach timber from the sea defence work to make benches and picnic tables. Phase 2 will continue the beach theme by including a play boat which can be used for all ages and abilities as its main feature. The existing play area has come to the end of its useful life being installed in 2005 with much of the equipment recently removed on the advice of Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents.

### Benefits

All children up to the age of 11 years living in the village as well as visitors to Camber will benefit from the new facilities. The adjacent Memorial Hall committee will benefit, increasing their opportunity for 'birthday party' bookings – this will contribute towards the sustainability of the Hall as a valuable community resource.

### Other Funding Sources

Camber Parish Council (CPC) has committed 50% of costs of the project.

### Support for the Project

Written support has been provided by:

- Camber After School Club
- Flip flops pre-school

Additionally, CPC undertook consultation with residents with children on the design and this feedback was included with the application. Written support has been provided by Ward Member Councillor Osbourne.

### Panel Comments and Recommendation:

The Panel were pleased to see that Phase 1 of the project has been delivered on schedule. The project benefits local children, visitors and the local village hall which is located within a deprived area. Good project sustainability has been demonstrated within the CPC's budget.

Recommend an award of £30,000 with usual conditions.

## **4. Hastings & Rother Furniture Service**

### Applicant and Grant Request Details

Hastings & Rother Furniture Service (HRFS) are a charitable company limited by guarantee. The grant will be used to take forward their 'Bexhill People's Shed' project (like a Men's Shed, but open to everyone). HRFS has the space to develop this project at their premises in Bexhill, but the space requires refurbishment before it is fit for purpose.

The space, once refurbished, will help them to develop the facilities needed to use the workshop space to bring people together to share skills, reuse materials and make things together.

### Benefits

The beneficiaries will be adults of all ages, many of them over 60 and on low incomes. We anticipate that there will be 40 training sessions in the workspace, providing 320 learning opportunities over the next year.

### Other Funding Sources

HRFS has received funding of £10,000 from Awards for All.

### Support for the Project

Whilst there is no written support (other than Ward Members), this project has been developed in consultation with HRFS service users.

Ward Members Councillors Bayliss and Courtel have provided written support for the project.

### Panel Discussion and Recommendation

As costs had been included in the project for staff time, only 50% of funding could be recommended to match fund the elements of the project that meet the grants criteria.

Councillor Courtel confirmed that the CEO of HRFS would be in agreement with this decision.

Recommend an award of £7,350 based on 50% of match funding for the elements within the project that meet the criteria.

Also, evidence to be provided that the shortfall (as a result of reduced award) in funding is met.

## 5. **Robertsbridge Cricket Club**

### Applicant and Grant Request Details

Robertsbridge Cricket Club (RCC) will use the grant to upgrade and renew the facilities with brand new, state of the art pitches and nets, up to the recommended England & Wales Cricket Board (ECB) standards for youth coaching.

### Benefits

The improved facilities will enable the club to continue to expand on the youth training programme. Revenues from the youth setup and competitions account for over 50% of the club's revenues, so the replacement of these facilities will ensure the ongoing health and sustainability of the club for the Village.

### Other Funding Sources

£10,000 has been pledged from the ECB (subject to other funding being secured); the applicants have committed £10,000 to the project. The applicant is awaiting the outcome of a request for funding from Salehurst & Robertsbridge Parish Council (SRPC), although this additional amount will not be required if the community grant is awarded in full.

### Support for the Project

Support has been received from:

- Hurst Green Cricket Club
- Sussex Cricket
- RDC Sports Development Officer
- SRPC (funding to be confirmed)
- Ward Member – Councillor Prochak

### Panel Comments and Recommendation

Good support from the ECB and Adrian Gaylon, the Council's Sports Development Officer.

Awaiting decision from the Parish Council regarding additional funding.

Agree award up to £10,000 taking account of any award made by the Parish Council.

## 6. **Stonegate Village Hall**

### Applicant and Grant Request Details

Stonegate Village Hall is a registered charity. The applicant will use the grant towards precautionary and preventative works on the hall's flat roof (to the rear of the building) to avoid substantial costs in the future as the flat roof is showing signs of deterioration. Rother Voluntary Action (RVA) has advised on this application and stated the following via email to the applicant:

“RDC do fund capital work through the Community Grants Scheme but they have to be sure that the work does not fall into ‘routine maintenance’ in other words they would be looking to make sure the roof had been well maintained and had now reached the end of its natural life, which is true in the case of Stonegate Village Hall”.

Evidence of ongoing maintenance has since been provided by the applicant.

### Benefits

The users of the hall will benefit from the project.

### Other Funding Sources

Ticehurst Parish Council has committed £3,000 to match the applicant's own contribution.

### Support for the Project

Written support has been provided by:

- Jane Coleman School of Dancing
- Stonegate Amateur Dramatic Society
- Ward Member Councillor Mrs Barnes has provided written support.

### Panel Comments and Recommendation

The Panel expressed some concern that this came under repairs and maintenance. However, RVA had assessed the condition of the flat roof and had given reassurance that it had reached its end of life. Additionally, evidence had since been supplied that the roof had been maintained throughout its life.

Recommend an award of £6,000 based on the usual conditions.

## 7. **St James The Great Church, Ewhurst Green**

### Applicant and Grant Request Details

The applicant will use the grant towards the installation of a tea station. The tea station is the first part of a 2-part project which includes the installation of an accessible toilet. The Parish has no building with adequate acoustics or a piano other than the church; the intention is to be able to offer refreshments and therefore make the church available to the community for events.

A number of estimates have been provided which cover the budget for the following:

- Kitchen units, work top, boiling hot tap and sink
- Fitting
- Plumbing
- Electrics

- Plastering

#### Benefits

The project will benefit the community of Ewhurst and other members of the public who attend various events at the church. The applicant is very keen to widen the use of the church to the entire parish. Currently the average attendance at the 'talks @ St James' is 40 (monthly talks given by visiting speakers, covering a wide variety of subjects and open to church goers and non-churchgoers. There is no entrance fee, but donations are requested which are directed to a charity of the speakers' choice or put to the tea station fund. Causes which have benefited include – Street Pastors in Hastings, the RNLI, the local hospital scanner appeal, Rwanda Aid and St Michaels' Hospice); monthly coffee mornings attract 30 (currently dirty crockery must be taken away by a volunteer).

#### Other Funding Sources

Funding of £12,500 has been committed by the applicant and a further £500 by the Parish Council.

#### Support for the Project

Support for the project has come from the Parish Council and Ewhurst Green Residents Association.

Ward Member support has come from Councillors Ganly and Mooney.

#### Panel Comments and Recommendation

The Panel agreed that this is not just a tea station but more of a community café facility which will greatly benefit the community for events.

Recommend an award of £5,000 based on the usual conditions.

### **8. Strandliners CIC**

#### Applicant and Grant Request Details

Strandliners are a Community Interest Company whose objective is to clear toxic waste from Rother's beaches and riverbanks. Their longer-term goals include stemming the tide of plastic waste at source by:

- interacting with polluters;
- raising public awareness in the community; and
- working with local and regional governments to effect long-lasting change.

Funding will be used exclusively in the purchase of necessary materials and equipment. They fall into three main categories: 1) collection equipment; 2) safety gear; 3) promotional materials.

#### Benefits

According to data recorded by the Ocean Project, 1,000 kilos of plastic waste flow into the sea from the River Rother and Military Canal annually. Plastic strewn area beaches and waterways are not just an eyesore – they present a dangerous health hazard both to local residents and out of town visitors. Keeping these areas clean presents benefits to local residents and the local tourism industry, additionally, there are longer term environmental benefits.

### Other Funding Sources

Funding has been received from The Rye Fund (£250) and Little Cheyne Court Wind Farm Community Fund (£630).

### Support for the Project

Councillors Gray, Mrs Hart, Mier, Norton and Prochak.

### Panel Comments and Recommendation

Panel noted that no funding had been received from Rye Town Council due to a lack of funds.

The project meets all the criteria and has the support of at least five Members. The Project contributes to the Council's commitment to tackle the climate emergency.

Recommend an award of £877 with the suggestion that the applicant approaches RDC to highlight and publicise all its upcoming events on the MyAlerts facility to include a request for volunteers.

## 9. The Archive Resource Centre (Pett Village Hall)

### Applicant and Grant Request Details

The Archive Resource Centre (ARC) are a Membership Society set up to establish and operate a local history archive centre, collecting, preserving and cataloguing historical documents, images and artefacts from the parishes of Fairlight, Guestling, and Pett and making them available for viewing and examination by the community's residents and ARC society members.

The grant will be used to convert an existing space within Pett Village Hall into a dedicated, secure archive room and equip it with appropriate equipment including computers, printer, scanner and archive containers.

### Benefits

The project will benefit residents of all three parishes (Pett, Fairlight, Guestling) – either by the preservation of archive materials donated by them or by their ability to view and inspect materials donated by others, in the centre or online. Initially this will particularly benefit older residents and local students, but as time passes all future generations will be able to gain a better understanding of their community's past.

### Other Funding Sources

Funding has been confirmed from the following:

- Fairlight Parish Council (£200)
- Guestling Parish Council (£100)
- Pett Parish Council (£200)

Funding applications have been sent to Isabel Blackman Foundation, ACRE, Persimmon. An application has been pre-registered with HLF.

### Support for the Project

- Ward Members Councillors Bird and Mier
- Support, including funding from the Three Parish Councils
- Fairlight History Group

### Panel Comments and Recommendation

The Panel notes a shortfall in funding of £6,000, however, the applicant has made several funding applications to other sources.

Panel members felt this was a good project which will benefit local residents and those with an interest in the history of the local area.

Funding also provided by the three local Parish Councils.

Recommend an award of £3,000 on the condition that evidence of the shortfall in funding is met.

## 10. **The Camber Memorial Hall**

### Applicant and Grant Request Details

Camber Memorial Hall intend to use the funding on improving access to the main building and the doctor's surgery which is used four days a week. Access will be improved by resurfacing the communal parking area for all users, including marking out parking bays including disabled and doctors spaces, and putting in place a designated walkway to ensure safety for wheelchair users and patients to the doctors surgery located at the rear of the building.

### Benefits

As well as patients, the project will provide benefits for all users of the Memorial Hall, including yoga, after school kids club, Nifty Fifties for elderly residents, short mat bowls, training for beach rescue teams and many more. The building is also designated as an emergency rest centre and used for national and local elections.

### Other Funding Sources

Funding has been received from Cheney Windfarm (£5,000) and Rye Community Grant (£500), with £800 committed by the applicant.

An application was made to Camber Parish Council, but no funding received (written support provided)

### Support for the Project

Ward Member Councillor Osbourne  
Camber Parish Council

### Panel Comments and Recommendation

No funding from the Parish Council – Panel Members felt this may be due to substantial funding being provided to the PC's own project.

Recommend an award of £5,000 based on the usual conditions.

**1. Battle Local Action Planning Group**Applicant and Grant Request Details

The Battle Local Action Planning Group is a constituted voluntary organisation whose main aim is to enhance the quality of life for the local community of Battle.

The grant will be used to pump-prime a healthy walk/cycle pathway at Battle Recreation Ground. This will be complimentary to creating a cycle skills area known as a 'Pump Track' to increase educational awareness and skills on cycling – funding for this element of the project is being sought from Sport England.

Benefits

The project will benefit young people in Battle who currently have nowhere to learn to ride their bikes. It will also benefit people with mobility problems (65+), parents with buggies or people with disabilities who want a traffic free, unpolluted experience for walking.

The pathway will potentially make a difference in terms of local peoples' health and mental wellbeing. It will offer residents who walk, cycle, ride or travel in mobility vehicles, an opportunity to be physically active, and socialise with those who they may not usually meet in their day to day lives, which could enhance local community cohesion.

RDC Corporate Objectives

The project meets two strategic aims within the RDC Corporate Plan: 'Stronger Safer Communities' and 'A Quality Physical Environment'. Under 'Stronger Safer Communities' the project will address some road safety issues; develop facilities which promote active lifestyles, linked to needs and for all ages; encourage participation in physical activity; and communicate the value of healthy lifestyles. Under 'A Quality Physical Environment' the project will contribute to maintaining the quality of parks and open spaces; support nature conservation and biodiversity; support local public, active and community transport initiatives; and give strong support to walking and cycling initiatives.

Other Funding Sources

The applicant has raised £8,022 through their own fund raising efforts. Additionally, the Battle Town Council is supporting the project with a grant of £30,000. The applicant has also been successful in gaining £93,118 through a Big Lottery Grant.

Project Sustainability

Battle Town Council has agreed to be responsible for the long term maintenance of Battle Health Pathway.

Support for the Project

Support from the project has been received from the following:

- Battle Town Council (including financial support)
- Hastings & Rother CCG
- Busybees toddler group

- Sustrans – England South
- Battle Brownies
- Active Rother
- Individual residents
- NHS Mental Health
- Claverham Community College
- Battle & Langton CE Primary School
- 1066 Cycle Club
- Saxonwood Care Home
- Martins Oak GP Surgery
- Rother Environmental Group
- ES NHS Trust

The two District Ward Councillors Dixon and Field are in support of the project.

## SMALL GRANT AWARDS 2019-20

Organisation	Project	Amount
Peasmarsh Memorial Hall	Hot Water System Improvements	£500
	Total	£500.00