

## **Reports from the Clerk & Financial Officer**

### **Report 1: Ecclesfield Parish Council Covid Support and Recovery Fund**

Members will obviously be aware of the general devastating effect that Covid-19 has had on the economy and well-being of the whole country.

These unprecedented times have had the same negative affect on the residents, businesses, and community organisations with the Ecclesfield Parish area.

Ecclesfield Parish Council has been unable to deliver its normal range of services and this has had a consequent effect on the budget and spending profile.

The Council has a range of statutory powers to affect the economic, social, and environmental well-being of a variety of organisations and constituted groups with the area.

The times we are living in are described as unprecedented and Councillors, officers and the wider community have expressed a strong wish that the Council should rise to these challenging times. Therefore, having regard to a) the effect of Covid-19 on the well-being of the area, b) the serious effect of Covid-19 suffered by local organisations and groups, and c) the ability of the Council to support such organisations and groups, and d) the Council's credit balances the Council agreed in principle at 21<sup>st</sup> January at its meeting to establish a fund to support groups and organisations most adversely affected by COVID-19. The aim of the paper is to set out on how this Fund might operate in practice as the basis for further discussion and consideration.

- The Parish Council creates a fund to be known as 'The Ecclesfield Parish Council Covid Support and Recovery Fund'.
- £25,000 is allocated to the fund in the financial year 2021/22.
- The Council reserves the right to increase the value of the fund up to £50,000 after taking account of the needs of the other aspects of the Council's commitments and aspirations for the financial years 2019/20 and 21/22.
- The fund will be operated in accordance with the Council's statutory powers.
- Applications will be made in accordance with the Council's established and approved (small) grants making policies and procedures, including monitoring.
- Applications will be made using the Council's agreed small grant application and monitoring forms. These forms application, however, will be amended slightly to reflect the contents of this paper e.g. a slightly amended title application form and to reflect the eligibility criteria set out below.
- Applications for support from the fund are sought by notifying local organisations and groups directly along with placing an advertisement in the local press.
- The fund will can provide grants of between £5,000 and £10,000 for twelve months.

- It will support groups and organisation in the Parish to 'Continue to deliver activity, supporting existing users and services, responding to the immediate crisis, or undertaking recovery or resilience activity in response to COVID-19 in Ecclesfield Parish'.
- This will be in addition to the Council's main grant programme, which provides small grants and which groups and organisations affected by COVID-19 can also apply to.

### Recommendation

It is respectfully recommended that Councillors consider the content of this report and agree a course of action.

### **Report 2: Ecclesfield Parish Council Small Grants Policies and Procedures**

At its 3<sup>rd</sup> December meeting the Council agreed that its small grants programme should move to a Ward based approach. They also asked that further work be undertaken to develop the policies and procedures guiding it and these be brought to Council for approval prior to its introduction. This discussion document sets out proposals how this might work.

- 1) The Council's grants programme should move to a ward based approach which would mean that each ward would have a small pot of funding to be spent on suitable and eligible activities benefiting that ward.
- 2) The amount each ward would receive would be based on the overall grant programme being divided equally by the number of parish councilors and multiplied by the number of Councillor's in each ward.
- 3) That this should be introduced in April 2021.
- 4) The approach should be reviewed before the end of April 2022.
- 5) That if the Council is supportive in principle to the approach, then further work be undertaken to develop the policies and procedures guiding it and these be brought to Council for approval prior to its introduction.

£45,000 is allocated to the small grants programme in 2021/22.

The fund will be equitably distributed across the wards in the Parish to be spent on suitable and eligible activities benefiting that ward.

The amount each Ward will be allocated on the overall grant programme divided equally by the number of Parish Councilors (including vacancies) and multiplied by the number of Councillors in each Ward. This would mean that for the financial year 2021/22 each Ward would be allocated £3000 (i.e. £45,000 divided by the 15 Councillors) then multiplied by the number of Councillors in that Ward.

Applying this methodology, will result in the following amounts being allocated to each Ward in the financial year. To be added.

When a grant application is received by the Council and a member of staff would notify the relevant Councillors who then make in writing an initial recommendation, including how much how to award.

Should none of the relevant Ward Councillors support the application it would be unsuccessful.

Should one or more of the Ward Councillors support the application it will then be considered by the Finance and Premises Committee.

At the Finance and Premises Committee meeting where application is to be considered the organisation would have an opportunity to present the application.

The recommendation of Finance and Premises Committee will then go to Full Council for ratification.

The applicant would be notified of the decision of Council accordingly.

Should a Ward not spend their allocation in a financial year then that will roll over into the next financial year giving them a greater sum to award to applicants.

Where an application spans one or more Wards the process will be the same as above bar:

- That all of the Councillors in concerned Wards will be notified and invited to comment.
- That, if successful, any amount awarded, for administrative purposes, will be allocated to each Ward on an equitable basis based on the number of Councillors in the relevant Wards e.g. if a group spanning two Wards was awarded £500, and the concerned two Wards comprised one with 2 Councillors (Ward A) and the other with 3 Councillors (Ward B), £200 would be shown as allocated to Ward A and £300 to Ward B.
- In addition, the grant application form will require to application to state (tick) which Wards it affects, including an option of more than one Ward.

### Recommendation

It is recommended that Councillors consider the content of this report and agree a course of action.

A TOWLERTON  
Clerk & Financial Officer