

## **POLICY, GOVERNANCE & FINANCE COMMITTEE**

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**Date:** Monday, 25 March 2024

**Title:** Grants & Subsidised Lettings

**Contact Officer:** Deputy Town Clerk

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### **Background**

The Council maintains budgets for general discretionary grants and subsidised letting grants for groups or organisations which require financial assistance towards projects, costs and venue hire in order to provide services for the residents of Witney. Grant requests are usually considered by this Committee bi-annually at meetings in June and January, however there is occasion when they need to be considered at other times of the year due to Council Committee timeframes.

### **Current Situation**

#### **Grants**

##### Madley Park Hall Trust

The Trust has submitted a grant request for £6,000 to the Council, as Landlord of the facility, due to an increase in running and upkeep costs during the cost-of-living crisis. Further information can be found in the attached application form.

The Trust has a Peppercorn Lease and is recharged for buildings insurance at the facility by the Town Council. In the current year, this charge was £494.46. The Town Council provided the Trust with a payment of £5,000 in 2022 which was a final amount the Council held in an earmarked reserve to assist with the set up of the Trust from the time of its creation.

Officers have provided details to the Trust directing them to other possible grant and funding opportunities for businesses.

#### **Subsidised Lettings**

##### Thames Valley Police

To note the recommendation of the Halls Cemeteries & Allotments Committee awarding subsidised letting at the Corn Exchange to the value of £175.50 for the launch of an interactive project 'Through their eyes' on 26<sup>th</sup> March 2024.

The aim of the project is to educate secondary school pupils on the effects of crime on us and the consequences.

*The following applications for discretionary grants have been received for the **2024-25** fiscal year (from 1 April 2024) with full information available on the accompanying forms and supporting information:*

#### Witney Photo Group

An application for subsidised hire of the Corn Exchange for a day's photographic exhibition of members' work on 25<sup>th</sup> May 2024 has been received to the value of £374.00.

The full application form and accompanying supporting documents are appendices to this report.

#### **Environmental impact**

Having declared a Climate Change Emergency at its Council meeting on 26 June 2019 – with this in mind Councillors should have due regard to the environmental impact of any decisions they make with regard to its facilities and services it operates.

#### **Risk**

In decision making Councillors should give consideration to any risks to the Council and any action it can take to limit or negate its liability.

The Council has a policy and criteria for which it uses to award its grants to ensure public funds are allocated and used appropriately.

#### **Social Value**

Social value is the positive change the Council creates in the local community within which it operates. Benefits provided by the above items are:

- Benefits to Witney's community - young, disadvantaged and vulnerable people within the town may benefit from the TVP project.
- Members of the Photo Group may benefit socially from the exhibition.

#### **Financial implications**

At the Annual Council Meeting held on 17 May 2023, the Council invoked the General Power of Competence under which the ability to award these grants is made.

Described here or as stated in the report above.

- There are no remaining funds in the discretionary grants budget for the 2023/24 year. A portion of the 2024/25 budget has already been allocated and there is no earmarked reserve for the purpose outlined in the application.

If the Committee were to look favourably on the request for financial assistance from Madley Park Trust it would need to be sought from other budget lines.

- The subsidised hire for Thames Valley Police is covered by the remainder of the 2023/34 subsidised letting budget.
- If favourable, the subsidised hire request from Witney Photo Group will be covered from the 2024/25 budget, replenished on 1 April 2024.

## **Recommendations**

Members are invited to note the report and consider the following:

1. The grant request from Madley Park Trust and,
2. Noting the recommendation of the Halls, Cemeteries & Allotments Committee for subsidised hire of £175.50 for the launch of the Thames Valley Police 'Through their eyes' project and,
3. The Witney Photo Group subsidised hire letting request which falls in the new fiscal year.