
Agenda Item: Grant Monitoring Report

Meeting Date: Monday, 25 November 2024

Contact Officer: Deputy Town Clerk

The purpose of this report is to provide Members with updates from recipients of grants awarded in the last year under the General Power of Competence, and to ensure the Council is satisfied the funds have been expended as agreed.

Background

The Council's current Grants Policy states, 'organisations receiving grant-aid, as a condition, are required to provide the Council with a written report within 12 months of the award date to demonstrate how the funds were expended'.

Following on from the last grant monitoring report presented to this Committee on 23 March 2024, it was advised a number of grants were awarded at the meeting on 5 February 2024 and should be monitored later in the year. Updates regarding these are included below.

Current Situation

1. Nature Now/Where The Fruit Is

The Council awarded £2,400 towards the facilitation of one set (of six) Nature Now forest school training sessions at the Witney Lake & Country Park for carers with young children – refugees, childminders, parents, grandparents, and foster carers.

A report has been provided which outlines the impact of the spring sessions which can be seen as **Appendix A**.

2. Witney Town Band

The Council awarded £500 to the Witney Town Band (Training Band) for the purchase of a new percussion instrument and banners for music stands.

Correspondence has been received outlining the expenses covered by the grant which can be seen as **Appendix B**. Invoices have been provided as evidence which officers can confirm. These invoices are available to Members if they deem appropriate.

3. Oxfordshire Mind

The Council awarded £500 to Oxfordshire Mind for help towards outdoor seating at the Witney Wellbeing Hub in Moorland Road.

Correspondence has been received providing an update on the furniture purchased with the grant and is attached as **Appendix C**.

4. Witney Day Centre

The Council awarded £500 to help towards payment for entertainers at the Day Centre during the afternoons.

Correspondence has been received outlining what the grant has been spent on and can be seen as **Appendix D**.

5. Broad Hill Play Group

The Council awarded £500 towards the cost of a new outdoor learning area (pergola).

An update report has been provided by the Play Group which outlines current progress on the pergola which can be seen as **Appendix E**.

A grant update has also been requested of Witney Buttercross Scouts (£3,500) but has not been received at the time of writing this report.

Other Grants

6. Witney Music Festival (WMF)

The Council entered into a Memorandum of Understanding/Service Level Partnership Agreement with WMF in 2022 which commits the Council to providing financial support annually for the community event held on The Leys in June.

A representative from WMF attended the Stronger Communities meeting on 23 September 2024 and provided Members with a verbal update (minute no. SC528 refers). A further update, along with the income and expenditure for the 2024 event, and the most recent WMF accounts are attached as **Appendix F**.

The above agreement refers to Council funding in Sections 4(d), 6(e) and 8. The agreement can be seen in its entirety and is attached as **Appendix G**. Members are asked to consider the level of funding for 2025 which has been £10,000 since 2022.

7. West Oxfordshire Community Transport (WOCT)

The Council entered into a new financial support agreement with WOCT earlier this year. The award provided a commitment to provide funds of £23,500 annually for three years.

Bus usage figures for the last 6 months (except June) are provided as **Appendix H**. Figures were provided before May but were summarised in a more readable format from that time.

A further grant monitoring report for awards made later in the year will be produced for the meeting on 31 March 2025.

Impact Assessments

The Town Council has a duty to consider the effects of its decisions, functions and activities on equality, biodiversity, and crime & disorder. Consideration should also be given to effects on the environment, given the Council's Climate Emergency declaration in 2019.

- a) Equality – no direct impact from this report.
- b) Biodiversity – no direct impact from this report.
- c) Crime & Disorder – no direct impact from this report.
- d) Environment & Climate Emergency – no direct impact from this report.

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.

Considered at the time of awards. To not monitor the grant recipients would be negligent on the Council's part and could lead to reputational and financial risk.

Social Value

Social value is the positive change the Council creates in the local community within which it operates.

Considered at the time of awards.

Financial implications

The funds for the above schemes and projects have already been allocated. There are no implications unless the Committee decides any project has not been undertaken to its understanding or satisfaction.

Recommendations

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

1. Whether any further information is required in relation to any listed grant recipients,
2. To note the financial position of the Witney Music Festival and consider the Council's level of financial support for 2025/26.

NB. Report compiled with assistance from the Administrative Support Assistant – Communities & Planning.