

## POLICY, GOVERNANCE AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

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**Date:** Monday, 6<sup>th</sup> June 2022

**Title:** Grants & Subsidised Lettings

**Contact Officer:** Deputy Town Clerk – Adam Clapton

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### Background

The budget for general grants (4100/407) for the financial year, 2022-23, budget cycle is £20,000.

The budget for subsidised lettings (4110/407) for the financial year, 2022-23, budget cycle is £1,800.

### Discretionary Grant Applications

The following applications for discretionary grants have been received: -

#### 1. Witney Town Band

A request for £660 as the annual grant request to cover the playing at three civic/town council events during the year.

Members should note the amount of £500 has been awarded annually for many years so the higher request reflects an increase in costs over this time.

#### 2. Witney Congregational Church

A request for £1,000 towards boiler repairs in the building.

Members should note that under s8 of the Local Government Act 1894, town and parish councils are not permitted to provide funds to churches or ecclesiastical charities. This Act has not been superseded by any subsequent legislation but more recent Acts, including the General Power of Competence appears to contradict it. The National Association of Local Councils has pressed the Government to deal with this issue but as of now it remains unresolved.

#### 3. Oxfordshire Foster Care Association

A request for £2,869 towards storage equipment and specialist holidays. Please see the grant application for further details.

#### 4. Witney Museum & Historical Society

A request for £355.64 due to the falling number of visitors at the Witney & District Museum.

If the application is agreeable, members may like to consider allocating annual funding to the organisation like Witney Twinning Association and Witney Town Band.

## **Subsidised Letting Applications**

The following applications for subsidised letting of the Councils premises have been received: -

### **1. Mayor of Witney**

A request for £510.00 to hold up to three fundraising events at the Corn Exchange during the municipal year for mayoral charities.

### **2. Carry on Dancing Club**

A subsidised hire request for the Corn Exchange to hold dance classes adjacent to the Town Council's weekly tea dance from 12-1.30pm. Halls Cemeteries & Allotments minute number H112 refers.

## **Additional Financial Requests & Matters**

### **Madley Park Hall Trust**

A request of £5,000 has been made by the Trust towards post Covid-19 running costs.

When the Council set up the Madley Park Hall Trust back in 2009/10 it pledged to support the trust financially and set aside three tranches of funding – the third tranche of £5,000 remains in the Councils accounts for release when requested.

### **Rotary Club of Witney**

This committee awarded a £500 grant towards the Colour Run Event which was due to be held on 29<sup>th</sup> May. Unfortunately, the numbers were too low to make the event viable, so it has been postponed until later in the year.

## **Environmental impact**

There would be no environmental impact if these requests were granted.

## **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.

The Council has the General Power of Competence (GPC) which generally discretionary grants are awarded under.

The Committee should note the information above regarding funding to churches and ecclesiastical charities. There is a risk that any award will be queried by the auditor, but by not awarding the Council runs the risk of not helping this community facility.

## **Financial implications**

As outlined in the report and grant applications.

- The remaining budget for discretionary grant applications in the current year is £19,500. £500 of this is allocated towards an annual grant for the town band.
  
- The remaining budget for subsidised lettings is £1,800.

## **Recommendations**

Members are invited to note this report and;

1. Consider the requests for funding as detailed in this report and the attached grant/subsidised letting applications.