

Report To: Charity Committee

Date of Meeting: Monday, 16 March 2020

Report Title: Foreshore Trust Small & Events Grants Pilot Round 2 2020-21

Report By: Victoria Conheady

Key Decision: Yes

Classification: Open

Purpose of Report

1. To present the recommendations of the Grant Advisory Panel (GAP) in respect of applications for the Small and Events Grants Pilot Round 2 2020-21

Recommendation(s)

That the meeting:

1. Consider for approval the Small and Events Grants Pilot Round 2 2020-21 recommendations of the GAP as set out in Appendix 1
2. Recommend the continuation of the combined Small and Events Grants programme following the evaluation of the pilot
3. Recommend the changes proposed at item 11, following the questionnaire feedback on the pilot programme, including any necessary provision within the Foreshore Trust business plan

Reasons for Recommendations

The Grant Advisory Panel has appraised the merits of the applications received for Small and Event Grant support and has made a number of recommendations for grant awards that can be funded from the available 2020-21 budget. The pilot was to run for two rounds (one year) and with the second call now closed it has been evaluated.

Background

1. The Foreshore Trust Small and Events Grants Pilot is a small and events grants scheme for voluntary and community groups offering a service or running an event within Hastings & St. Leonards.
2. In September 2018 there was approval to develop a pilot for a year from April 2019 to March 2020 of combined events and small grants programme. The £30,000 allocated to the current events grant programme and the £60,000 of the small grants programme to be combined into one pot for the pilot. This was suggested because of the low uptake of the events grant programme and the high uptake of the small grants, so that the funding could be allocated fully throughout the year.
3. To date there has been two calls of the pilot programme, one opening in April 2019 with grants awarded in October 2019, and the second opening in October 2019 with grants to be awarded in March 2020, with the £90,000 allocation split into two £45,000 pots. This has enabled applicants to apply for events and/or small grants twice throughout the year rather than just once.
4. £45,271 is available for Round 2 in the 2020-21 financial year for grants of up to £6,000 each.
5. As advised when permission was given to run this pilot; this programme has been evaluated and reported on in paragraphs 8 - 12.

Small and Events Grants Awards 2020-21

The process used to invite and evaluate grant applications was in accordance with the protocols agreed by the Charity Committee in December 2014.

The Panel met in January 2020 to discuss the respective merits of each application. Its recommendations are set out in the report from the Panel Chair (Appendix 1).

6. All of the applications for funding were assessed in terms of the organisations' ability to deliver their proposals, how closely the proposed activities match the priorities of the Charity Committee, value for money and a fair distribution of funds amongst all the priorities and members of the community.
7. In total, fourteen projects are recommended for approval with some of these subject to conditions. All of the approved projects are to be delivered between April 2020 and March 2021. The amount recommended totals £45,271.00.

Evaluation of Foreshore Trust Small and Events Grant Programme Pilot – Rounds 1 2019-20 and 2 2020-21

8. The team that manages the Foreshore Trust Small and Event grant programme administration set up and sent out a survey to 225 current and previous applicants of the programmes. They received 25 replies, which equated to 11% of the surveys sent out.
9. The summary results were as follows:

68% preferred the new two-call pilot.

68% were happy with the programme timings of both rounds of the pilot.
52% felt that it was easier to apply to the combined pilot than have two separate calls each year for one each of an events and a small grants programme.
72% wanted to be able to access the application form on-line.
For previous applicants to the programme, one person stated that the reason they had not applied again was that they felt that the application process was too lengthy, and that there was too much of a lag on learning of success compared to other grant programmes.
What worked well (in order of percentage): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • general communication • format of application • application process • guidance • programme management and administration
What didn't work well: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • contractual process
What could be improved: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The top category was marketing and publicity and included one comment that examples of previously funded applications could be made available.
Additional comments included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold a celebration day which the successful applicants, the funders and the public could attend • Look at decreasing the time between the application deadline and the approval decision • Organisations have been grateful to the Foreshore Trust for the support for local need through activities and events, and for the well-organised administration and support through the application processes.

10. An additional observation with combining the events and small grants programmes and increasing the application threshold, but not proportionately increasing the total funding pot available, is that approximately 25% less applicants can be funded. This has made the grant funding more competitive but where the awarded applicants, by receiving more money, are able to make a greater impact.
11. Recommended changes from the feedback:
 - a. A list of previously funded applications is included in the East Sussex County Council's External Fund Newsletter and some are listed in the Hastings Borough Council (HBC) press release when the new programme round is advertised. It is proposed that a list of successful projects and events from the previous round is added to the Foreshore Trust page on the HBC website when the new programme round is advertised, and a link to this provided in the programme guidance.
 - b. Currently there is no provision for organisations to download an application from the Foreshore Trust page on the HBC website. For this to be considered there would need to be a basic applicant login, which would then enable a Word version of the application to be downloaded. Logging of the application requests is an important element of the programme administration.
 - c. The survey results indicated the marketing and publicity was the area most in need of improvement. It is recommended that the option of advertising the programme on social media is explored further from the next round of funding onwards.

- d. Foreshore Trust to provide provision within its business plan for improvement and maintenance of its website/online presence to allow for the changes recommended above to be resourced.

12. In addition to the survey, evaluation data and comparisons for various categories from the previous five years of the small and events grants programme have been included in Appendix 2.

Policy Implications

13. The Foreshore Trust's Grants Schemes support activities that impact positively on the social and economic wellbeing of residents in the Borough, as well as assisting organisations in delivering a range of activities for local people that might otherwise be unavailable. The priorities of the Events Grants Scheme are to provide assistance to projects that increase the number of people participating in healthy and enjoyable activities along the seafront and that celebrate and enhance cultural diversity.

Wards Affected

All

Policy Implications

Reading Ease Score: 50.1

Please identify if this report contains any implications for the following:

Equalities and Community Cohesiveness	Y
Crime and Fear of Crime (Section 17)	N
Risk Management	N
Environmental Issues & Climate Change	N
Economic/Financial Implications	Y
Human Rights Act	N
Organisational Consequences	N
Local People's Views	N
Anti-Poverty	N
Legal	N

Additional Information

Appendix 1 – Report by the Chair of the Grants Advisory Panel with the Panel's recommendations (Appendix A).

Appendix 2 - Foreshore Trust Combined Grants Pilot Round 1 2019-20 and Round 2 2020-21 Evaluation Data

Officer to Contact

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