

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Community Grant Panel held at Online via the zoom app on 26 January 2021

Attendance list at end of document

The meeting started at 10.00 am and ended at 11.35 am

36 Public Speaking

Dave Underwood spoke on behalf of West Hill British Legion and reported that the British Legion had been in its current premises since 1947 and was a vital component of the village providing a social hub accessible to all members and guests as well as other clubs and societies that use the facilities regularly.

For a long time the kitchen had been a bugbear as it was only a small domestic fitted kitchen and was only suitable for reheating food and with the help of a veterans covenant fund was able to treble the size of the space. He explained the purpose of the grant application was to now equip the kitchen to help extend the range of facilities available to anyone using the premises by being able to prepare and serve food on site.

37 Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 5 October 2020 were agreed as a true record.

38 Declaration of Interests

Minute 42. West Hill British Legion.

Councillor Jess Bailey, Personal, West Hill Parish Councillor; As a West Hill Ward Member provided a supportive statement for the application and also use the British Legion Club.

Minute 44. Colyford Memorial Hall.

Councillor Helen Parr, Personal, As a Ward Member for Coly Valley had provided a supportive statement for the application and used the hall.

Minute 46. Beer Football Club.

Councillor Geoff Pook, Personal, Not a current member but did provide supporting statements in their application.

Minute 47. Current rules of the fund.

Councillor John Loudoun, Personal, Sidmouth Town Councillor; Had been involved in a campaign to save our village pub and was a former Secretary of a Limited Company that sought to purchase our local pub.

39 Matters of urgency

There were no matters of urgency.

40 Confidential/exempt items

There were no items that officers recommended should be dealt with requiring exclusion of the public or press.

41 **Amount of money available**

Jamie Buckley, Engagement and Funding Officer reported that there was £22,250 in the Community Buildings Fund pot for 2020/2021. She reminded Members that at the last meeting the panel had decided to use £2,383 from this year's pot on two worthy applications which had reduced this year's pot to £19,867 which ends 1st April 2021.

Members were advised that up until now, since 2008, there had always been two closing dates per financial year to enable applications to be received throughout the year. It was highlighted that to fund all of the projects received in the first deadline would take nearly all the money and suggested to Members that they may wish to consider not funding all the projects on the agenda so as to allow a second funding round.

42 **West Hill British Legion**

Jamie Buckley, Engagement and Funding Officer reported that West Hill British Legion had applied for a grant of £5,000 to fit out a bigger kitchen to enable hirers and members to prepare and cook food on the premises. Members noted that although there were other community buildings in West Hill the building was well used by members and other community groups. Members also noted that they do have a grant from the Parish Council.

Concern was expressed about the low scoring mark for the need by the local community which did not reflect that the building was heavily used by the school and the preschool.

RESOLVED that West Hill British Legion application for £5,000 be granted.

43 **Exton Village Hall**

Jamie Buckley, Engagement and Funding Officer reported that Exton Village Hall had applied for a grant of £2,567.76 for an audio and sound system with a hearing loop to allow more users of the hall to access all the facilities. Members noted that the village hall was the only one in Exton and under normal circumstances, outside of Covid-19 was used very regularly. They had obtained three quotes and the rest of the money was coming from the village hall itself.

RESOLVED: that Exton Village Hall's application for £2,567.76 be granted.

44 **Colyford Memorial Hall**

Jamie Buckley, Engagement and Funding Officer reported that Colyford Memorial Hall had applied for a grant of £4,611.68 to replace the tongued and grooved floor of the main hall. The hall was the only one in Colyford and was very well used. Members noted that the floor was failing on a regular basis and emergency repairs had been done as often as possible but it was at a stage now where they cannot do that anymore. The works were well planned and they had all their other funding in place. It was noted they did have a significant amount of money in reserve but this was to be used for other projects.

Councillor Parr advised the hall was vitally important to Colyford and was extremely well used and raised concerns that the community lacked support for the replacement floor.

In response it was suggested that because of the nature of the project the community did not know the floor was failing.

RESOLVED: that Colyford Memorial Hall application for £4,611.68

45 **Newton Poppleford Pavilion**

Jamie Buckley, Engagement and Funding Officer reported that Newton Poppleford Pavilion had applied for a grant of £2,000 from the Community Buildings Fund. The pavilion was very well used but often received complaints from users about the windows, doors and other woodwork. The works, if supported, would make the building more efficient, more secure and more sustainable. The works were well planned and they have all their funding in place including a grant from Devon County Council.

Councillor Paul Hayward, non-committee member urged Members to consider the application advising the building had in the past suffered vandalism of smashed windows and a damaged door. The windows leak and were no longer energy efficient and with the heating on full blast the heat just goes straight out the windows and the doors.

Councillor Pook concurred and said it was important to retain these types of village facilities that could be a target for vandalism if they were seen in a bad condition and suggested having only a single round of spending each year and highlighted that if it was viable and there was a community need the panel should be funding it.

In response to Minute 41 Councillor Loudoun advised that as there had been advertisement of the two deadlines for this financial year we should allow this but raised concerns about how much would be left in the budget for the second application deadline. He suggested top slicing each application on the agenda by 5% or 10% to help achieve a bigger budget for the end of the financial year.

RESOLVED: that Newton Poppleford Pavilion's application for £2,000 be granted.

46 **Beer Football Club**

Jamie Buckley, Engagement and Funding Officer reported that Beer Albion Football Club was well used by the Football Club and occasionally used by other groups and was also available for private hire. They were asking for a grant of £4,633. There was one other community building within Beer which was also well used and quite often booked up. Members noted the project was to expand the Football Club by making a viewing area which would mainly be used by the club's spectators.

She advised a number of letters of support had been received for the wider project, which included a new bar area and expanding the rest of the facility but Members were advised this could not be considered as a whole as the work had already started on the wider project.

Members noted that the accepted quote that they would like to continue to work with would include free labour which is something that we do not often see on applications.

Councillor Pook expressed disappointment that it felt like the Football Club was being persecuted for putting a lot of work in and starting the project based on all the other funding they had achieved.

Due to the limited community benefit of the viewing area project, Members discussed giving less of a grant than the Football Club were asking for.

RESOLVED: that Beer Football Club be granted £3,500. This is a reduced amount from the £4,633 applied for.

47 **Current rules of the Community Building Fund**

Members discussed the rule that community buildings in town council areas cannot apply for funding and considered the following factors in terms of allowing community buildings in town council areas to apply:

- a) There is only £22,250 a year in the Community Buildings Fund which is nearly always given out every year to high scoring worthy applications and recommend a much larger amount of funding to be made available.
- b) The possibility of receiving a higher volume of funding applications due to Covid-19.
- c) Town Councils versus Parish Councils. Town Councils are expected to help fund community buildings in their area from the receipt of higher precepts.
- d) Sustainability.
- e) Town council areas – some town councils include villages.

Members agreed a wider debate was required to understand what the council was trying to achieve, to address what support was needed and to help understand what assets the communities use in the East Devon area.

Members discussed the question about whether community pubs could be included in the current rules of the fund.

RECOMMENDED:

1. That Members defer subject to further discussion which will include data that needs to be obtained, including a timetable to then ensure that any details are considered into any budgetary considerations for 2022/2023.
2. That Members defer the question about whether to include community pubs in the current rules of the fund subject to further discussion and research.

Attendance List

Councillors present:

J Bailey
D Key
J Loudoun
H Parr
G Pook
J Rowland (Chairman)

Councillors also present (for some or all the meeting)

P Hayward

Officers in attendance:

Jamie Buckley, Community Engagement and Funding Officer
Wendy Harris, Democratic Services Officer
Debbie Meakin, Democratic Services Officer

Chairman

Date: