

REPORT OF THE STRATEGIC DIRECTOR
TO THE ABINGDON AREA COMMITTEE
1 FEBRUARY 2005

Community Grants

1.0 Introduction and Report Summary

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to set out the current budget position for this Committee in respect of Community Grants and to invite Members to consider and determine the grant applications received since the last meeting.
- 1.2 The contact officer for this report is Lorna Edwards, Community Strategy Officer (Tel: 01235 547626).

2.0 Recommendations

- (a) *Members are asked to note that the Committee's current budget is £13,850.12*
- (b) *Members are asked to determine the grant award, the agenda and the Council priority in respect of the following:*
- (i) ***Abingdon Jazz Club, £500**, towards the cost of monthly jazz events, Social Agenda, Town & Village Vitality priority*
 - (ii) ***Abingdon Decorative & Fine Arts, £500**, towards an exhibition of children's art as part of the Charter celebrations, Social Agenda, Town & Village vitality priority*
 - (iii) ***Abbey Brass, £500**, towards the cost of repairs to the band-room portacabins, Social Agenda, Town & Village Vitality priority*
 - (iv) ***Abingdon Musical Festival Association, £400**, towards the cost of a concerto class, Social Agenda, Town & Village Vitality priority*
 - (v) ***Abingdon Concert Band, £2,400**, towards the cost of buying timpanis and putting on a play day to attract new members, Social Agenda, Town & Village Vitality priority*
 - (vi) ***7 Dorchester Crescent**, a grant towards the cost of tree maintenance, Environmental Agenda, Town & Village Vitality priority*
- (c) *Members are asked to reconsider the application for tree maintenance considered at the meeting on 11 October to determine whether, in the light of further information, the award of an additional grant is appropriate*
- (d) *Members are asked to note that supplementary guidance for grants supporting historic buildings, work on trees, countryside conservation and parish cleansing has been agreed and will be available to them in the near future*
- (e) *Members are asked to receive the report from Abingdon Town Council on their twinning activities and determine whether the grant of £2,500 agreed under the Service Level Agreement can be paid*

3.0 Relationship with the Council's Vision, Strategies and Policies

3.1 This report supports the Council's Vision and Priorities. It also supports the Vale Community Strategy. It does not conflict with any Council strategy or any Council policy.

4.0 **Budget**

4.1 The current budget position for this Committee for the year 2005/06 is as follows:

Budget b/f from 2004/05	Budget 2005/06	Total budget 2005/06	Environment al Agenda Proportion	Social Agenda Proportion	Economic Agenda Proportion	Discretion -ary Proportion
£8,231.12	£ 30,618	£38,849.12	£10,716.30	£10,716.30	£3,061.80	£6,123.60 + £8,231.12
	Allocated	£24,499.00	£1,929.00	£10,716.30 (+ £2,032.58 from discretionary)	£1,000	£10,853.70
	Remaining	£14,350.12	£8,787.30	£0	£2,061.80	£3,501.02

The amount remaining is net of the £2,500 SLA twinning grant for Abingdon Town Council which was earmarked at the beginning of the year.

Furthermore, the grant of £500 awarded to the Abingdon Marathon in July 2005 as a guarantee against loss has not been required due to the success of the event, so this amount has been included in the total remaining to be reallocated.

5.0 **Community Grants**

5.1 Applications have been received in respect of the following organisations and there are narratives providing additional details at Appendix A to the report. Although all the grant applications are for £500 or less and would normally be determined under delegated authority by the Head of Innovation & Enterprise in consultation with the Chair, since a Committee meeting was imminent and since five of the six grants are for arts events or projects, it was felt that the Committee would welcome the opportunity to discuss them.

Members are invited to consider and determine the grant awards, the Council agenda and priority for the applications listed below. In accordance with Members' wishes, no officer recommendation has been provided for the level of grant for the application for tree maintenance work. However, details of the level of grant awarded in the past for such grants is included in the attached narratives.

5.2 Reconsideration of grant application from Gordon Hudson & Co for tree maintenance in Shelley Court, Abingdon

At the last meeting of the Abingdon Area Committee held on 11 October an application was considered from Gordon Hudson & Co concerning tree maintenance on a group of trees at Shelley Court, Abingdon. Authority was delegated to the Head of Innovation & Enterprise in consultation with the Chair of the Committee to award a grant of up to £200 subject to checking the detail of the number of trees under a Tree Preservation Order. The grant awarded represents 10% of the total cost of the works and is in line with the grants towards tree maintenance/safety which have been awarded by the Abingdon Area Committee in the current financial year.

5.3 Shortly after the meeting the Chair of the meeting met the applicant and was shown the trees in question. Following discussions between the Chair and relevant officers it was agreed to award a grant of £200 in accordance with the delegated authority. Since the trees are substantial, some of them are very close to the properties and the resulting maintenance costs are high, and since the Committee had not been aware of this fact when the original application had been considered, the Chair is asking the Committee to reconsider the application. Photos of the trees and a plan of their location will be circulated at the meeting.

5.4 Members are asked to view the photos, reconsider the application and determine whether their original award, which has been paid, was appropriate or whether, in the light of additional information, they consider it appropriate to make an additional award. A narrative providing further details is attached at Appendix B.

5.5 Changes in criteria to grants supporting historic buildings, work on trees, countryside conservation and parish cleansing

During the current financial year the Council has undertaken a review of the Community Grants criteria and adopted revised criteria at the Council meeting on 20 July 2005. Since then the Executive portfolio-holder for Community Enterprise has been in discussion with officers regarding the provision of supplementary guidance for applicants wishing to apply for a grant to support historic buildings, work on trees, countryside conservation and parish cleansing, all of which had been the subject of individual grant schemes in the past prior to the merging of grant monies into one scheme, the Community Grants Scheme.

5.6 At a meeting on 20 December 2005 the Executive portfolio-holder for Community Enterprise reviewed and agreed changes to the criteria for grants that support historic buildings restoration, work on trees or countryside conservation and parish cleansing work. The changed criteria emphasise that the grants are discretionary and any amount awarded will depend on the available budget and the priorities of the respective committee. However it is hoped that all area committees will be consistent in the use of the revised criteria.

5.7 Some aspects of the revised criteria will require legal clearance but it is hoped that this can be achieved by March in time for the last cycle of Committee meetings in this financial year. It is also hoped that a revised supplementary guidance leaflet for historic buildings will be available on Valeweb and in hard copy format for use by councillors and residents alike by the end of March.

5.8 Members are asked to note that supplementary guidance for grants supporting the areas named above has been agreed and will be available to them in the near future.

5.9 Service Level Agreements with Abingdon Town Council and the Abingdon & District Twin Towns Society

In accordance with the resolution passed on 11 October 2005 by this Committee, the Head of Innovation & Enterprise can confirm that the twinning Service Level Agreements for the Town Council and Abingdon & District Twin Towns Society require that both consult each other and work in partnership in order to develop community twinning and avoid duplication of activities.

5.10 Furthermore, as requested, Abingdon Town Council has provided a report outlining the Town Council's involvement in twinning activities between 1 December 2004 and 30 November 2005. The report is attached at Appendix C.

5.11 Abingdon Town Council is involved in community as well as civic twinning. Its community twinning programme is designed to be accessible and relevant to all residents of Abingdon. The Town Council is also keen to use twinning to develop links between businesses in Abingdon and its twin towns.

5.12 Abingdon & District Twin Towns Society community twinning programme is designed to be of particular interest to its membership who pay a subscription in order to support its activities.

5.13 Members are asked to determine whether the Service Level Agreement grant of £2,500 can be paid to Abingdon Town Council for the year 2005/06. This amount was allocated in the budget at the beginning of the financial year.

TOBY WARREN
HEAD OF INNOVATION & ENTERPRISE

TIM SADLER
STRATEGIC DIRECTOR

Background papers: grant applications and grant update