

(i) Applicant: Wantage Blind Club

Brief outline of project

Wantage Blind Club would like to apply for a grant towards the cost of providing transport for blind people accessing the Day Centre in Wantage, from Wantage/Grove and Faringdon and their outlying villages which include Sparsholt, Uffington, Letcombe Regis, Longcot, Charlton.

The service will benefit at least 26 blind people and will help them to avoid social exclusion due to their disability. The club buys this service from Oxfordshire County Council and does not make a charge to its users.

This application supports the Access to Services and Transport strands of the Vale Community Strategy.

Financial Information

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| Total Project Cost | £1,921 to run Centre; £1,080 (zero-rated for VAT) for transport to Day Centre for 2 months |
| Balances | £708.65 at 31.12.04 |
| Running Costs | £1,603 at 31.12.04 |
| Own Contribution | Balance after grants |
| Grant Sought | £880 towards transport |
| Previous Awards (Vale) | £382 in 2003/04; £382 in 2002/03 |
| Parish Council Support | Applied to Wantage Town Council (outcome awaited) |
| Parish Precept | Wantage: £120,000, Band D: £31.52 |
| Other Support | Faringdon United Charities Grant awarded £200 |

Officer comment: Dot Morrison (Health Development Officer)

With the trend for people to live longer, organisations like this will become increasingly necessary to combat social exclusion.

(ii) Wantage Counselling Service

Brief outline of project

Wantage Counselling Service (WCS) is seeking a grant towards the cost of providing a counselling service in 2005/06 for clients drawn from an area of

20-40 miles around Wantage; more specifically the grant is to cover 50% of the shortfall arising from counselling clients with addresses in the Vale on reduced fees because of low household incomes.

The Service provides all the necessary support, administration, office premises, professional management, clinical supervision etc for a team of some 20 fully-trained voluntary counsellors. The main style of counselling offered – psychodynamic counselling – deals with deep-seated problems which generally require some months of regular weekly one-hour sessions to be resolved. Local GPs and the SW Oxon PCT value WCS as an additional service for patients in need of longer-term counselling than is available through the NHS.

The problems dealt with by the Service often lead to low self-esteem and anxiety which correlate with difficult personal relationships and poor employment performance. Such problems need to be resolved by counselling before clients can move on to more confident and productive lives.

During the year September 2003 – August 2004 (the latest period for which figures are available due to confidentiality requirements) the Service was contacted by 147 people, 123 received counselling. Of these, 62 people came from the area in and around Wantage/Grove, representing 50% of the clients, and a further 6 clients came from Abingdon. Clients with below average resources pay less than the £30 fee per session on a sliding scale based on net household income.

The Service has approached the SW Oxfordshire PCT for funding but although they are very happy to endorse the service offered by the Wantage Counselling Service, they have stated that they are at present limited to offering some short-term counselling at GP surgeries on the NHS.

The Wantage Counselling Service supports the Health and Wellbeing and Access to Services strands of the Vale Community Strategy.

Financial Information

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| Total Project Cost | £39,000 including VAT; £35,100 excluding VAT (VAT cannot be reclaimed) | |
| Balances | £10,577 at 31.08.04 (latest audited accounts) | |
| Running Costs | £58,657 2003/04 | |
| Own Contribution | Balance after grants & donations | |
| Grant Sought | £1,500 | |
| Previous Awards (Vale) | 2004/05 | £2,500 |
| | 2003/04 | £3,000 |
| | 2002/03 | £2,000 |

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| | 2001/02 | £250 |
| | 2000/01 | £500 |
| Parish Council Support | Wantage Town Council £525, Faringdon £50, Didcot Town Council £50 granted in 2004/05 similar amounts expected in 2005/06; W. Berkshire District Council £1,000 for 2005/06 | |
| Parish Precept | Wantage: £120,000, Band: D £31.52 Grove: £166,388, Band D: £57.95 | |
| Other Support | 21 individual or corporate donors in 2004/05 totalling £9,347; private trusts and corporate donors will be approached in 2005/06. £2,705 sponsored walk in 2004/05 | |

Officer comment: Dot Morrison (Health Development Officer)

This is a very professional organisation as evidenced by the referrals from the NHS. The fact that the cost of counselling depends on the client's income demonstrates that this service addresses social exclusion.

(iii) Applicant: St Matthew's Harwell Parochial Church Council (PCC)

Brief outline of project

St Matthews Harwell Parochial Church Council is seeking a grant towards upgrading the church extension. This is in response to the Disability Discrimination Act. It is proposed to upgrade the toilet and improve access to the kitchen. The change will involve changing the layout of the ground floor, which contains a lobby, small gents and ladies toilets, a small kitchen area and meeting room. The meeting room will remain, but the rest will be converted to a smaller lobby, a disabled toilet and a larger kitchen, with the ladies toilet kept as a second toilet facility.

The project will benefit all users of the church which is used not only for services but for village concerts, by the Harwell Young Singers and visitors including bell-ringers. For some services/events the church attracts over 200 people.

In the questionnaire for the Harwell Parish Plan in 2002, 796 out of 1,434 respondents (mostly non churchgoers) said that it was "extremely important" for the village to have the church.

This application supports the following strands of the Vale Community Strategy: Access to Services, Town and Village Vitality, Health & Wellbeing.

Financial Information

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| Total Project Cost | £14,500 excluding VAT based on tender in 2004 |
| Balances | £35,482 at 31.12.04 |
| Running Costs | £63, 536.50 |
| Own Contribution | In principle up to £5,000 to cover the shortfall after grants and donations but this would be a drain on reserves in the current circumstances. |
| Grant Sought | £4,970 |
| Previous Awards (Vale) | None |
| Parish Support | The Parish Council has donated £100 |
| Parish Precept | Harwell: £30,280, Band D: £29.75 |
| Other Support | An appeal to the church membership has resulted in pledges worth £7,905 which equates to £9,530 after tax recovery. Has applied to Historic Churches Preservation Trust for a contribution. Will apply to Central Church Fund and the Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment (end of July deadline for both) The Parochial Church Council does not wish to apply for lottery funding. |

Officer comment: Dot Morrison (Health Development Officer)

Improving the accessibility of the church hall will be a benefit to the community as it will provide another venue for community activities and thus contribute to the vitality of the village.

(iv) Historic Building Grant Application: St Mary's Church, Childrey

The Reverend of St Mary's Church is seeking a grant towards the comprehensive restoration of the church tower and nave. St Mary's is a Grade I listed building, within the village conservation area, thought to have built during the 13th and 14th centuries with later additions.

The restoration work will include:

- Re-hanging the bells and strengthening the bell frame
- Exterior stonework repairs and repointing, and window repairs
- Porch- new lead roof, stonework repairs and re-leading of the windows
- Overhaul of the rainwater goods

- Timber treatment to nave roof, tower roof and floor timbers, and vestry floor
- Nave – lead roof repairs and other associated works

Although the District Council's historic buildings grant scheme does not normally grant aid works such as rainwater goods and timber treatments, these represent a small part in the overall comprehensive restoration of the historic fabric of the church, which will leave it in a good state of repair for many years to come.

Financial Information

All the work has been estimated to cost £128,000. So far the church has raised in the region of £90,000, including:

£10,000 from Oxford Historic Churches

£3,050 from Oxford Bell Fund

£10,700 from various national church trusts

£500 from Childrey Parish Council

and around £66,000 from individual donations – a considerable amount.

This leaves a shortfall of around £38,000

The level of grant offered under the Historic Building Grant Scheme is normally 25% of the cost of eligible works up to a maximum of £1500 for churches.

Officer comment (Alison Blyth, Principal Planning Officer):

The application fulfils the criteria adopted by the District Council for the operation of its Historic Buildings Grant Scheme: The building is listed, within a Conservation Area, open to the public and is an integral part of the historic character of the village.

Recommendations

The Reverend of St Mary's Church be offered the maximum grant of £1500 towards the cost of the restoration work subject to the normal Historic Building Grant conditions.