

## Wantage Summer Festival

### Briefing Note

At the South East Area Committee held on 20 January 2005 an application for grant aid towards the Wantage Summer Festival 2005 was considered and an award of £3,500 made.

A letter of application, dated 18 October, and completed application form had been received on 22 October 2004. The letter refers to the Wantage Summer Festival 2004 and asks for a grant towards the 2004 festival expenses incurred in June/July 2004.

However, in accordance with the Council's non-eligibility criteria (applications will not be considered for activities that have already taken place), the narrative prepared for the Committee report for 20 January referred to the 2005 Summer Festival due to take place in June/July 2005. A note written by the Recreation Services Officer on the top of the application letter states that "Wantage Town Council are going to award £1,050 towards the 2005 festival" which supported the view that the application should be taken as relating to the 2005 festival.

The Hon. Treasurer for the Wantage Summer Festival attended the South East Area Committee meeting on 20 January and made a statement to the Committee. A copy of the statement is attached and refers to both the 2004 festival events as well as those planned for the 2005 festival, without specifying that the application is retrospective. The minutes (SE 31 and SE 32 (b)) show that the discussion of the application and the decision taken referred to the 2005 festival.

Since the meeting on 20 January it has emerged that the application dated 18 October had been submitted for the 2004 festival and had been a duplicate application, as the original application had gone astray in the post. There was no indication to this effect in the duplicate letter of application or application form. The applicant has produced a copy of the original application which was dated 30 April 2004. If this application had been received and processed it would have had to be considered by the South East Area Committee as urgent business at its meeting on 4 May 2004 in view of the need to consider the application before the event.

It is clear that there was confusion on both sides and that a number of individual occurrences led to the application for the 2004 Wantage Summer Festival being considered as an application for the 2005 festival.

To avoid similar problems arising, changes have been made to the processing and tracking of grant applications and all applicants will be advised that their application has been received. This should alert applicants who don't receive

an acknowledgement that their application may have gone astray in the post or e-mail system.

The current situation is that the Wantage Summer Festival has been awarded a grant of £3,500 towards the 2005 festival (11 June – 12 July) but has not been awarded a grant towards the 2004 festival.

The applicant had believed that the grant had been awarded for the 2004 Festival and would therefore have needed to submit an application for the 2005 festival to the Committee's March meeting in order for it to be considered in advance of the event. The dates of the meetings in 2005/06 were only agreed at the meeting on 10 March, so the applicant would not have been aware prior to this that his only option was to submit a 2005 application to the March meeting given that the first meeting of the S E Area Committee was scheduled to be held on 13 June, two days after the start of the festival.

In view of the unusual circumstances, the applicant is requesting that the attached application for the 2005 festival be considered, even though the event is in progress.