

GRANTS SUB-COMMITTEE

Summary: To provide an update on Action points resulting from the January 2018 Grants Sub Committee meeting.

Recommendations:

- 1. That the update be noted.**
- 2. That improvements to the running of the SDF programme be agreed**

Officer Ref: Edward Bonn, Rural Skills and Grants Officer (01451 862032)

Current update:

As no Action points were noted in the Minutes to the January 2018 Executive Meeting, the following updates are provided:

The following SDF projects had submitted funding requests during 2017-18, following submission of the necessary claim forms:

Application 3 – Butterfly Conservation (2016-17)

Partial payment of grant in the sum of £552.14.

Application 10 – Wychwood Project (2016-17)

Partial payment of grant in the sum of £1,853.24.

Application 8 – Stroud Community Agriculture (2015-16)

Partial payment of grant in the sum of £3,686.92.

Application 16 – Hanwell Parish Council (2017-18)

Full payment of grant in the sum of £2,289.

Application 11 – Weston Sub-Edge Parish Council (2016-17)

Partial payment of grant in the sum of £1,000.

Application 6 – Freshford Parish Council (2016-17)

Partial payment of grant in the sum of £2,000.

Application 2 – Stonehouse Parish Council (2016-17)

Partial payment of grant in the sum of £1,667.

Application 1 – Penny Williamson (2017-18)

Partial payment of grant in the sum of £1,198.

Total: £14,246.30

Grant allocation: 2017-18

From a total of £27,593 funding for 2017-18 grants, £13,214.93 had been granted to the following projects:

Application 1 – Penny Williamson

GRANT AWARDED - £1,198

Application 12: Chalford Village Shop

GRANT AWARDED: £1,727.93

Application 15: Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group SW (FWAGSW)

GRANT AWARDED: £,8,000

Application 16: Hanwell Parish Council

GRANT AWARDED: £,2,289

The following project had withdrawn their application, due to a refusal to accept the criteria stipulated by the Cotswolds Conservation Board to award the grant, namely removal of a hedge impeding public access to common land:

Application 3 – Trevor Haydu-Jones

GRANT APPLICATION WITHDRAWN - £2,298 (increased from £1,705 due to additional project costs)

This withdrawal increased the available funding for new applications from £12,080.07 to £14,378.07.

Available funding: 2017-18

When this remaining total of £14,378.07 for 2017-18 was added to the existing reserve from subsequent years of £35,000, the current Sustainable Development Fund comprised £49,378.07.

On this basis, £14,378.07 was added to the earmarked reserve, to ensure that the remaining funds for 2017-18 was available for allocation to subsequent applicants. The Sub-Committee approved this proposal.

When existing funding commitments were factored in, which totalled £24,164, a remainder of £25,214.07 was available for commitment to new applications within the current financial year of 2017-18, when the reserve was included as an available resource. The applications which the responsible Officer recommended for funding totalled £22,726, which if approved, would result in £2,488.07 being transferred to the next financial year.

New applications

The following applications were considered at the January Sub-Committee meeting:

Application 7 – Stroud Valleys Project

The Sub-Committee approved the re-submitted application for a Wild Classrooms project and accompanying booklet aimed to primary school pupils, on the basis that the project related to the Cotswolds Conservation's Board Rural Skills educational programme for young people, and there were also numerous opportunities for partnership working in providing educational opportunities for young people which related to the AONB's landscapes and countryside.

GRANT AWARDED: £7,974

Application 17 – Hawkwood College

This project involved improvements to the interpretational signage for the applicant's 42 acre site and creation of a visitor trail. The active land management of the Hawkwood estate, with its organic farming, woodland and biodiversity (principally wetlands) operations will also be communicated to visitors via this signage, plus the involvement of volunteers in its design and installation. The Sub-Committee deferred a final conclusion on the basis that re-submitting the application with more explicit reference to the project's contribution to conserving the historic landscape of the Cotswolds would demonstrate a stronger link to the Cotswolds Conservation Board's management plan.

GRANT DEFERRED: £8,000

Application 18 – Shipton Parish Council

Two applications for i) bicycle racks (£375) and ii) a sustainable transport hub (£6,000) to benefit the local community had been submitted, which totalled £6,375. The Sub-Committee rejected this application on the basis that the County Council's Highways authority had surveyed the location and recommended both the bicycle racks and sustainable transport hub, however, did not have the funds for the work,

hence the application to the Sustainable Development Fund. However, there may be future resources which the County Council's Highways authority could use for these projects, and additional discussions were required to ascertain whether this was the case prior to allocating any Sustainable Development Fund grants.

GRANT REJECTED - £6,375

Application 19 – Bristol & Avon Rivers Trust

As a project aimed at data-gathering by volunteers of the Bristol Avon Rivers Trust, with their efforts coordinated by an experienced Project Manager, this application has the potential to offer benefits for the farming community within the upper Avon area, in addition to other parties such as residents and visitors using the road network in this area and the Cotswolds Conservation Board, who would receive the final report.

On the basis, the Sub-Committee approved a grant, however, additional elements to work resulting from the project report could be considered by the applicant, such as a workshop programme with local landowners, in particular farmers, to fully disseminate its findings.

GRANT APPROVED - £7,200

Application 20 – Chadlington Memorial Hall

The applicant requested funding for replacement of tables in the memorial hall of Chadlington village, with this application rejected by the Sub-Committee due to empty fields within the application form and subsequent lack of connection to the Cotswolds Conservation Board's management plan.

GRANT REJECTED - £1,671.98

Application 11 – Brailes Flood Group

The Sub-Committee approved the application in principle for a grant to implement Natural Flood Management (**NFM**) measures to reduce to flow of upstream water courses, pending confirmation that the project was not eligible for Environment Agency funding. Upon confirmation from the applicant on this point, the funding would be allocated.

GRANT APPROVED (IN PRINCIPLE) - £7,551.60

Application 12 – Chalford Village Shop

The applicant had requested permission to purchase two additional items, as the overall project would not utilise full grant allocation of £1,728.93. EB tabled an email from the applicant itemising the items in question, and the Sub-Committee approved this request.

GRANT APPROVED (June 2017 with approval in January 2018 for purchase of additional items) - £1,617.74 (revised amount).

Improvements to the running of SDF

The sub-committee agreed to recommend to the Executive several improvements to the running of SDF, summarised below:

- Identification of a themed approach to Sustainable Development Fund applications over the next 3 year period, subject to a review at the end of year 2. This theme would be for funding requests that have an educational purpose or remit relating to the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, with specific reference to its landscape, geology, biodiversity and/or historical environment of the AONB.
- 10 potential developments for the administration of the Sustainable Development Fund, thereby ensuring the best possible use of available resource, including the Fund's responsible Officer and Sub-Committee. A summary of these potential developments follows:
 - an increase in delegated authority funding distributed by the responsible officer from £2,500 to £3,000;
 - a calendar detailing annual operations of the Sustainable Development Fund to potential application, to assist with timing their applications;
 - workshops for potential applicants provided by the responsible officer, to provide initial guidance if required (details will be included in the annual Sustainable Development Fund calendar available via the fund's website);
 - a transition from hard-copy to electronic documentation where possible (this development applies to several of the suggested changes);
 - case-studies of successful applications within the Cotswolds Lion and other forms of media, to demonstrate the Fund's potential to possible applicants (improvement identified as the precursor to a more detailed consideration of communication measures relating to the Fund, in discussion with colleagues such as the Communications Officer and Business Planning Officer;
 - various administrative changes, which include a waiting period for successful applications to avoid consecutive applications, inclusion of the reporting form once a project has completed in the original

application document, and amendment to the terms and conditions document for application in regards to any increase in costs beyond the total grant allocated from the Sustainable Development Fund being met by the applicant.

Supporting Paper(s):

None