

FULL COUNCIL 14th APRIL 2021

GRANTS SCHEME: FEEDBACK AND REVIEW

1. PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

- 1.1 To provide feedback on the grants awarded in 2020-21 and to approve arrangements for 2021-22.

2. FEEDBACK FROM GRANT RECIPIENTS

- 2.1 As expected, the number of applications for a grant decreased in 2020-21. In total, the Council made 6 grant awards totalling £6,650
- 2.2 Feedback has been received from grant recipients and a summary of the activities are detailed below under the wellbeing objectives:

Give young people a good start in life

- **ACE.** £400 for food parcels in run up to Christmas 2020. 44 parcels were distributed to households of varying sizes including to families with young children. Many referrals for help were received from agencies such as Acorn centre and local schools. ACE has seen a rise in members of the community asking for help, many are previously employed people or who are currently furloughed due to the current pandemic.

Challenges of demographic change

- **Abergavenny Community Trust** - £1000 towards sanding and revarnishing of the hall floor which had reached the stage where it had begun to pose a risk to the safety of Centre users in wet weather as it would become slippery. In 'normal' times, the main hall is used for a variety of purposes, so the project will in time benefit a wide range of people in Abergavenny of different ages. The floor is now easier to keep clean.

Economically thriving town

- **Virtual Wall2Wall Jazz Festival** £1,000 grant. At the outset it was agreed that all musicians should be paid the full fee that they should expect for a live performance and that the festival would 'ticket' the event despite the awareness that this was not a widely practised approach. The opportunity has taken to thank the festival's host town, with each video opening with photographs taken in and around Abergavenny. Some 330 tickets have been sold - and not only locally but with interest from around the UK and overseas. It is estimated that the videos have been watched by over 1,000 people. In addition, nine short promo videos were posted to social media and they attracted thousands of views - both home and abroad (including over 2,000 views in Kuwait!). At the end, there is a festival deficit of £1,800 mainly due to the film/video spend being higher than budget predictions but now the club owns eleven excellent videos and these can produce further income. Black Mountain Jazz would like to thank the Town Council for its support - which made the decision to go ahead an easier one to take. A

more detailed report and details on how to access one of the videos can be obtained from the Town Clerk.

- **Aber Writing Festival** £1000 towards the running cost of Aber Writing festival (please note that the Festival is supported from the sponsorship of events budget not grants scheme but included in this report for completeness) The festival originally planned for April 2020 was effectively reorganised for an online event in November. Most of the events were translatable into an online format, although everything had to be adapted and reconsidered. Abergavenny was promoted at the beginning and end of each video with images of the town. With Abergavenny Town Council funding (and other supporters) the event was run without charging participants. The writers who took part were paid the fees originally agreed for the planned live event.
- The Festival was able to reach more people than usual by taking the events online. Events were offered in Welsh and English. Normally there would be a cost per event, but given how much free content is available online we took the view that the events needed to be free to encourage maximum number of people to view as possible. This was made viable by the support of Abergavenny Town Council and our other partners.
- The project reaches out to all ages – children and adults – and one of the main objectives is to attract groups and individuals who might not engage with writing (through more conventional events and literary festivals). By taking the festival online we were able to reach a wider geographical audience. We certainly had more “attendees” than in past years, with over 1,000 people viewing the combined sessions.
- Connection with the local schools got much stronger – thanks in a large part to the work done by Lynn Clausen in organising the youth writing competition. The Mayor Tony Konieczny took part in the Zoom event to congratulate the winners of our Youth Writing Competition. Filming and sharing the sessions was something Festival organisers had not done before and it was a steep learning curve. However the response to the films was excellent – with viewers commenting on how professionally they had been produced. Now that they have the knowhow and contacts to do this, they are considering recording and streaming the sessions in the future which would allow them to reach those who are not able to come to the venue for health reasons.

Plas Gunter Mansion £2500 towards emergency repairs to the building. Repairs are currently underway.

Environment

- **Friends of Castle Meadows** – £1000 grant. Dipping platform works delayed due to the site being too wet to undertake the works. Works to be carried out as soon as it is possible to do so.
- **Friends of Bailey Park** £750 Two benches purchased which are positioned near the sunken garden with plaques inscribed stating they were donated by the Town

Council. The beds around this area have been an eyesore for quite sometime, and the grant has been used to achieve a complete makeover, planting and weeding. A water pump has also been purchased for use in the summer months.

3. GRANTS SCHEME 2021/22

- 3.1 It is proposed that the criteria for the small grants scheme remains the same as in 2020/21, namely £1000 upper limit and 25% match funding. The eligibility criteria will remain the same. Council has agreed a budget of £5000 for 2021/22.
- 3.2 It is proposed that the criteria for the large grants scheme is amended slightly to include an upper limit of £2500 as the Council has allocated a budget of £8000 in 2021/22.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 To note the feedback from grant recipients.
- 4.2 To agree to the changes set out in section 3 which will come into effect immediately.