

AGENDA ITEM No. 11

Notes from the virtual Meeting of the **Grants Panel** held on **Tuesday 20th July, 2021** at **5.30pm**

In attendance – Councillors Ms L Crawford, J Ellis, A Hutton, Mrs G Parker and B Smith

Assistant to the Town Clerk

Apologies received from – Councillors J Moody and H Smith

The Panel had reviewed the current Grant Application Form, Grant Policy and Grant Scoring Process. These had last been reviewed and amended by Council in 2016, in response to Councillor concerns that the previous approach did not provide sufficient rigour in the assessment process. The changes made at that time included, in particular, the introduction of a scoring matrix and associated criteria, together with feedback forms.

During the ensuing discussion particular reference was made to;

- that the Application Form and Scoring Process were far too complex, and lengthy, and would benefit from being simplified. This also applied to the Grants Policy, which it was felt included too many conditions to be met by applicants;
- that too much evidence was currently required, which may exclude some organisations from applying for a Grant i.e. the requirement for Audited Accounts to be submitted with an application;
- that Tavistock Town Council was one of the most difficult organisations to apply for a Grant from, due to the length and complexity of the Application process and level of required evidence;
- that any proposed changes to the Application Form and Policy would still need to meet all legal/sector obligations;
- that ranking applications, rather than scoring them, might provide a fairer more transparent outcome. This could perhaps be tested using the Grant Applications received in 2019 (so before the Coronavirus Grant Application process introduced for 2020);
- that as elected Members the community should have confidence in Members' ability to make financial decisions, without a complex application/scoring process, as members make financial decisions on other matters on a very regular basis;
- that perhaps a sum from the overall grant 'pot' of £ 17,500 should be set aside to be allocated to those organisations applying for Grants of £ 500 or less. This would help ensure that those organisations asking for lesser amounts stood a better chance of receiving the full amount requested;
- that a local community organisation, which applied for grant funding on an annual basis, should perhaps have a sum set aside from the overall 'pot'

on an annual basis, and that they didn't necessarily need to submit an annual application;

- that any changes to the Application Form, Policy or Scoring Process would need to be agreed by Council at its Meeting scheduled for 14th September 2021.

Noted That Councillors Ellis and Mrs G Parker undertook to review the current Grant Application Form, Grant Policy and Grant Scoring Process, and to report back to the members of the Panel by 10th August 2021, for further review. The Assistant to the Town Clerk to be included in all e-mail correspondence.

Meeting ended at 6.30pm.

**Date of next Grants Panel Meeting – Monday 23rd August 2021 (tbc)
at 5.30pm (virtual)**