

THE USEFUL WOOD COMPANY – APPLICATION FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Executive Summary

The Useful Wood Company is a newly established charity that seeks to address social exclusion and unemployment by providing training and volunteering opportunities through wood work. The Charity supports long-term unemployed, people with mental health problems, the homeless and ex-offenders. The Company collects unwanted wood from local contractors for the project, with the majority of the wood collected turned into items for sale. Unusable wood would become firewood or be pulped for biomass.

The initiative is aimed at vulnerable members of the local society, seeking to give them confidence through a workplace setting where they can gain reliability in attending, develop relationships within a team and learn practical skills. This will provide them with a strong platform to gain employment and become self-sufficient with life and work skills.

The application is seeking funding of £40,000 in the coming year, comprising £13,000 capital funding and £27,000 revenue funding. The capital is to purchase a second hand van to be used for the collection and delivery of wood and finished products. The revenue funding would be used to recruit a new Centre Manager and covers both salary and national insurance contribution.

The request for revenue support represents a substantial proportion of the Council's funds and is likely to result in ongoing revenue support, though it is noted that the applicant has indicated that the need for funding from the Council would be reduced by the third year. It is not felt that the Council has the resources to provide the level of revenue funding requested for a newly established Group and it is therefore recommended that the request for revenue funding is not supported.

It is proposed, however, that the application for the purchase of a van is supported and that funding of £13,000 is awarded as a one-off grant from the Community Fund. It is felt that there is sufficient justification to award the full funding necessary for the van purchase. As part of the conditions linked to the Council's support, it is proposed that the vehicle should be made available to Woking Borough Council in the event its assistance is required during a time of need such as flooding or similar event in the Borough.

Recommendations

The Executive is requested to:	RESOLVE That <ul style="list-style-type: none">(i) no revenue funding be awarded for the coming year; and(ii) a one-off capital award of £13,000 be approved for the purchase of a van.
Reason for Decision	The Council is not in a position to provided significant revenue funding for the new project. However, it is in a position to support the purchase of a van, recognising the importance transport plays in the aims and objectives of the Charity.
Legal Authority	S19 (Misc. Provisions) Local Government Act 1976

The Useful Wood Company – Application For Financial Assistance

Conditions	<p>Accounts. The Organisation must submit accounts for the year in which the grant is awarded, including an income and expenditure account and balance sheet. Please note that accounts for other years may also be required.</p> <p>Monitoring Information. The Organisation must submit monitoring information as a measure of its achievements. Failure to provide details will jeopardise the award. E-mail requests will be sent to the applicant.</p> <p>Publicity. Where possible, the Organisation is required to publicise the support received from Woking Borough Council, including on websites and literature / leaflets produced.</p> <p>Payment Period. Final claims must be made by the second week in April. Unclaimed awards will not be available at a later date unless exceptional circumstances can be demonstrated to the Council before the end of the award year.</p> <p>Joint Working. WBC expects the Organisation to engage positively on health and wellbeing multi-agency joint work affecting Woking. Groups which refuse may place their Council support at risk, e.g. grant, concessionary rent and other assistance.</p> <p>Invoices / Receipts. In order to claim an element of the funding, the Organisation must submit paid invoices or receipts relating to equipment purchased or services provided.</p> <p>Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. Following the introduction of new legislation from April 2018, the Council expects the support of partner agencies in identifying people at risk of homelessness as early as possible to maximise the opportunities to prevent such. Partner agencies / organisations are expected to be engaged in joint working arrangements to assist in finding suitable housing and support solutions, and where appropriate to undertake and respond to the new 'duty to refer'. Groups which do not support this new legislation and way of working positively may put their Council support at risk.</p> <p>Emergency Use of Vehicle. The vehicle to be made available to Woking Borough Council in the event its assistance is required during a time of need such as flooding or similar event in the Borough.</p>
Performance Indicators	<p>Users. The Organisation to provide a breakdown of the users.</p> <p>Publicity. The Organisation to advise how the Council's support has been publicised.</p> <p>Statement of Use. The Organisation to provide a statement stating the use to which the grant money has been put.</p>
Future Support	<p>The recommended funding is based on a one-off award and accordingly carries no implications in terms of future support.</p>

The Executive has authority to determine the above recommendations.

Background Papers:

2020/21 Application Form.

The Useful Wood Company – Application For Financial Assistance

Reporting Person:

Ray Morgan, Chief Executive
Extn: 3333, Email: ray.morgan@woking.gov.uk

Contact Person:

Frank Jeffrey, Democratic Services Manager
Extn: 3012, Email: frank.jeffrey@woking.gov.uk

Doug Davern, Democratic Services Officer
Extn: 3018, Email: doug.davern@woking.gov.uk

Portfolio Holder:

Cllr Ayesha Azad
Email: Cllrayesha.azad@woking.gov.uk

Shadow Portfolio Holder:

Cllr Will Forster
Email: cllrwill.forster@woking.gov.uk

Date Published:

18 February 2020

The Useful Wood Company – Application For Financial Assistance

The Useful Wood Company – Application For Financial Assistance

1.0 Summary of Application

1.1 Status and Aims	<p>The Useful Wood Company offers those on the margins of society the opportunity to restart their lives by providing a work type environment where they will be supported by volunteers to encourage them, and provide support and gain workplace skills and regular attendance over varying periods of between eight weeks and six months.</p> <p>The volunteers are predominately retirees with good people skills and in some cases woodworking skills who want to come alongside those involved. Environmentally, wood will be collected from building and construction sites to be reused wherever possible resulting and significant reduction in landfill and pollution.</p> <p>The Charity's objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">i. To develop the capacity and skills of the members of the socially and economically disadvantaged community of the Borough of Woking and the surrounding area, in such a way that they are better able to identify, and help meet, their needs and to participate more fully in society.ii. To provide support and training which develop their skills, capacities and capabilities to enable them to participate in society as mature and responsible individuals.iii. To support employment through training and assistance.iv. To promote social inclusion by preventing people from becoming socially excluded, relieving the needs of those people who are socially excluded and assisting them to integrate into society.v. To promote the conservation, protection and improvement of the physical and natural environment by the use of timber much of which would otherwise be sent to landfill, and therefore reducing the local area's carbon footprint. <p>The Charity operates from the former Jobcentre premises in Goldsworth Road.</p>
1.2 Employees	The newly established Charity does not currently have any employees. The Charity envisages that by 2020/21 it will need to recruit an office manager for oversight of day to day operations such as wood collections, and resales/sales of wood and products made by volunteers, oversight of volunteers and invoicing and implementation of policies.
1.3 Volunteers	At the time of this application the project was entirely supported by volunteers and was recruiting for additional volunteers. Additional volunteering roles will include collection teams driving to building/construction sites collecting wood, sorting the wood into different categories and denailing the wood etc. Trained volunteers will work alongside those being supporting as they rebuild their lives from lack of confidence, personal trauma, addiction, mental health issues and including refugees. Office/admin volunteers are also being recruited to enable effective day to day operations. All volunteers will receive basic Health & Safety training, and DBS checks will be undertaken.
1.4 Clients/Users	30 to 50 individuals.

The Useful Wood Company – Application For Financial Assistance

	All those coming to the enterprise will be referred by established agencies such as The York Road Project, DWP Woking (job centre), Woking Borough Council, The Lighthouse, Freshstart, Community Mental Health Recovery Service Woking, Welcome Church, Christchurch, New Life Church, Woking Besom, and CAP.
1.5 Members	None.
1.6 Sum Requested	£40,000, comprising £13,000 in capital funding and £27,000 in revenue funding.
1.7 Project	<p>The capital funding would be used to purchase an additional van in order to increase the amount of wood that can be collected and recycled and expand coverage area.</p> <p>The revenue funding would be used to recruit a new Centre Manager and covers both salary and national insurance contribution.</p>
1.8 Cost breakdown:	<p>The costs are based on the purchase of a second hand caged tipper van at an approximate cost of £13,000. The revenue element consists of a salary of £25,000 for the Centre Manager with National Insurance Contribution of £1,800 to £2,000.</p>
1.9 Community Benefit	<p>The Charity aims to support 12-15 individuals at any one time, with the periods of engagement ranging from between two and six months dependent on the individual's circumstances and needs. The Charity will seek to help those recovering from trauma by encouraging them to achieve a goal such as making something from wood, working as a member of a team and regular timekeeping. They will develop new skills that can be used to re-enter the workforce and be able to participate more fully in society.</p> <p>The volunteers will benefit from being able to have the opportunity to give back to the community and see their skills and compassion benefit wider community needs. The Borough will benefit by recycling wood which will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce the amount of waste sent to landfills and incinerators. • Conserve natural resources such as timber, water and minerals. • Increase economic security by tapping a domestic source of materials. • Prevent pollution by reducing the need to collect new raw materials. • Save energy <p>The Charity will monitor the</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Number of placements and number of placement days per month. ○ % placements completing their safety training modules in first calendar month. ○ % placements attending regularly 1 month after their first day. ○ Monthly assessments of progress on non-quantitative measures such as confidence, social interaction, skills attained. ○ Accident frequency rate.

The Useful Wood Company – Application For Financial Assistance

	<p>Since being established early in 2019, The Useful Wood Company has been in contact with a number of local organisations including the York Road Project Woking, DWP Job Centre Woking, Christians Against Poverty Woking, Woking Besom, Woking Borough Council, The Lighthouse Woking, Freshstart Woking, Churches Together in Woking and Woking Community Mental Health (NHS).</p> <p>The Charity has also contacted local construction companies a number of which have expressed interest in the wood recycling service.</p>
--	--

2.0 Financial Background	
2.1 Budget	<p>At the time of the application, the Group held £4,000 in the bank.</p> <p>The Charity has to-date received no other support. There are outstanding applications with trusts and foundations include the Co-op local community fund, Community Foundation for Surrey and the National Lottery Community Fund and Greggs Community Projects Fund.</p>
2.2 Accounts	The Group was established earlier this year and no accounts are therefore available.
2.3 Support over the past five years	New Application.

3.0 Assessment of Application		
3.1 Key Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="radio"/> Constitution<input type="radio"/> Registered Charity<input type="radio"/> VAT Registered<input type="radio"/> Equal Opportunities Policy<input type="radio"/> Safeguarding Policy<input type="radio"/> Reserves Policy<input type="radio"/> Quality Mark<input type="radio"/> Other funding sources pursued<input type="radio"/> Other support by the Council<input type="radio"/> Fundraising<input type="radio"/> Two quotes<input type="radio"/> Regular monitoring provided previously	<p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>No</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>No</p> <p>No</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>No</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>N/A</p>
3.2 Consultee Comments	<p><u>Adam Thomas, Family Support Manager</u></p> <p>The Useful Wood Company are a new charity based in Woking, offering service users a chance to engage in a work-style environment and investing in their skills and abilities holistically. The charity is requesting £13,000 of capital funds for the purchase of a tipper van</p>	

The Useful Wood Company – Application For Financial Assistance

	<p>which will enable them to pick up and transport their materials and products. They are also requesting £25,000 for the salary of a Centre Manager.</p> <p>Due to the high demand for grants it is acknowledged that full funding as per this application may not be possible this year. However, I support this new initiative and having visited it personally I understand the need and consider this to be a creative new charity and one that Council's family support teams will utilise. Should all requested funds not be an option then I suggest that the capital funding is awarded to enable the purchase of a vehicle.</p>
3.3 Assessment	<p>The Useful Wood Company is a newly established charity that seeks to address social exclusion and unemployment by providing training and volunteering opportunities through wood work. The Charity supports long-term unemployed, people with mental health problems, the homeless and ex-offenders. Similar schemes have already been established for many years across the Country.</p> <p>The Company will collect unwanted wood from local contractors for the project. The majority of the wood collected will be turned into items for sale, with the rest becoming firewood or being pulped for biomass.</p> <p>The initiative is aimed at vulnerable members of the local society, seeking to give them confidence through a workplace setting where they can gain reliability in attending, develop relationships within a team and learn practical skills. This will provide them with a strong platform to gain employment and become self-sufficient with life and work skills. The Applicant has also advised that that the project will divert wood from landfill.</p> <p>Following research undertaken, the applicant anticipates moving into sustainable operating profit by the end of year three. Whilst support will be required in the meantime, the Charity believes the level of support needed will reduce noticeably during this three year period. As a CIO, all profits in the project activities will be reinvested back in the project.</p> <p>The application before the Executive is seeking funding of £40,000 in the coming year, comprising £13,000 capital funding and £27,000 revenue funding. The capital is to purchase a second hand van to be used for the collection and delivery of wood and finished products. The van would be the second van to be purchased by the Charity; the applicant anticipates that the Charity will need at least two vans to cover the Borough. The revenue funding would be used to recruit a new Centre Manager and covers both salary and national insurance contribution.</p> <p>The Charity has to-date been largely funded through the Welcome Church and has relied on donations and support in-kind for their wood working equipment and accommodation in Goldsworth Road. It does not currently have any funds to put towards the proposals now before the Executive.</p> <p>The request for revenue support represents a substantial proportion of the Council's funds and is likely to result in ongoing revenue support, though it is noted that the applicant has indicated that the need for funding from the Council would be reduced by the third year. Whilst there is a need for a co-ordinator for the initiative, it is not felt that the</p>

The Useful Wood Company – Application For Financial Assistance

Council can provide the level of revenue funding requested for a newly established Group. It is therefore recommended that the request for revenue funding is not supported, and that the Group is encouraged to work with the Council in identifying potential funding streams.

It is proposed, however, that the application for the purchase of a van is supported. The success of the project relies on the ability to collect and deliver wood and wooden products; the scheme would be hampered if it was unable to maintain a good supply of wood, impacting on its ability to self-fund. It is acknowledged that the Charity does not have the resources to provide 50% of the costs of a van and accordingly it is recommended that the Council awards the funding requested of £13,000 from the Community Fund. The exceptional circumstances in this instance is the need to ensure the Charity has the resource to collect and deliver wood and wooden products, without which the success of the initiative would be significantly hampered. The funding would be awarded on a one-off basis.

As part of the conditions linked to the Council's support, it is proposed that the vehicle should be made available to Woking Borough Council in the event its assistance is required during a time of need such as flooding or similar event in the Borough.

REPORT ENDS