

WOKING TALKING NEWSPAPER (1988) ASSOCIATION – APPLICATION FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Executive Summary

The Woking Talking Newspaper Association has applied for a grant to cover the costs of renting office space at the Moorcroft Centre. The Group provides visually impaired people of Woking with a weekly audio tape containing local news. The Service is available to those of any age and the Group is working with Sight for Surrey with the aim of increasing the overall numbers to between 60 and 100 listeners.

Woking Talking Newspaper has applied for grant support of £1,870 in 2020/21. The funding would offset the charges from Woking Borough Council for renting a room at the Moorcroft Centre in Westfield for a period of approximately four hours per week.

It is noted that the Group provides an excellent and valued service to those with a visual impairment in the Borough, along with ongoing awareness-raising to increase its number of users. The Group states that it currently supports a total of 46 users in the Borough who are registered blind or have a visual impairment, with the Trustees actively engaged on programmes to increase the number of listeners through contacts with care homes, carers and relations of visually impaired persons.

The service has been described by many users as a "lifeline". Many radio and television stations provide regional news but with the aid of the Woking News and Mail they can deliver Borough news and information to visually impaired persons.

The Council has supported the Group for many years and it is recommended that a grant of £1,870 be awarded for the 2020/21 financial year.

Recommendations

The Executive is requested to:	RESOLVE That funding of £1,870 be awarded towards the cost of renting a room at the Moorcroft Centre.
Reason for Decision	To enable Woking Talking Newspaper to continue to provide its service to those people in the Borough with a visual impairment.
Legal Authority	S19 (Misc. Provisions) Local Government Act 1976
Conditions	<p>Accounts. The Organisation must submit audited 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 quarterly 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 on a quarterly basis.</p> <p>Publicity. Where possible, the Organisation is required to publicise the support received from Woking Borough Council, including on all literature and leaflets produced.</p>

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	<p>Payments. Payments. Unless exceptional circumstances exist all invoices must be received quarterly with details of the costs incurred and monitoring information for the previous quarter.</p> <p>Payment Period. Final quarter claims must be made by the second week in March. 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>
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 financial pressure on the Council's budgets is expected to continue in the coming years and accordingly the overall level of support available in future years may be reduced. The applicant is therefore to be advised that the award of funding for 2020/21 does not imply that a similar application in 2021/22 would be supported. In particular, it is emphasised that the Council is unlikely to be in a position to award any sums above the 2020/21 levels.</p> <p>In view of this, the applicant is to be advised to ensure that contingency plans for the Group's operations for 2021/22 have been drawn up in the event that the Council is unable to continue its support beyond April 2021. All applicants are strongly recommended to pursue alternative sources of funding and are encouraged to approach Woking Borough Council's Community Support Team for advice and support.</p>

The Executive has authority to determine the above recommendations.

Background Papers:

2020/21 Application Form.

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

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Email: Cllrayesha.azad@woking.gov.uk

Shadow Portfolio Holder:

Cllr Will Forster

Email: cllrwill.forster@woking.gov.uk

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1.0 Summary of Application	
1.1 Status and Aims	<p>Formed originally in the late 1960s and converted to a registered charity in 1988, Woking Talking Newspaper provides a free weekly news information service to blind and visually impaired persons. The Association produces an audio version of the Woking News and Mail together with other publications and "Magazine" items. The recordings are produced every Thursday evening (the day of publication of the newspaper) and distributed via Royal Mail on USB thumb drives/memory sticks. All their readers and recording producers give their time on a voluntary basis and are from the Woking area.</p> <p>The weekly recordings are produced in a rented room at the Moorcroft Centre for the Community. Woking Borough Council currently provides a grant to meet the rent of the room and storage facilities for their equipment.</p>
1.2 Employees	None
1.3 Volunteers	35, whose activities include preparing the Talking Newspapers as well as volunteers who run a programme of marketing and awareness initiatives that comprise contacts with Sight for Surrey, The Macular Society and other charities, doctors, care homes, carers and care managers.
1.4 Clients/Users	<p>45, comprising:</p> <p>12 male</p> <p>33 female</p> <p>45 disabled</p> <p>45 resident in Woking</p> <p>The service is provided free of charge to users.</p>
1.5 Members	<p>79, comprising:</p> <p>30 male</p> <p>49 female</p> <p>46 disabled</p> <p>1 ethnic minority</p> <p>79 resident in Woking</p> <p>All listeners and volunteers are classed as members. The Group believes that the majority of its members are over 65 years old, with all over the age of 45.</p>
1.6 Sum Requested	£1,870 (Revenue)
1.7 Project	The Grant funding will offset the charges made by Woking Borough Council for renting a room (The Moorcroft Suite) at the Moorcroft

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	<p>Centre for the Community in Westfield. This room is used for approximately 4 hours each Thursday and serves as a recording studio.</p> <p>In addition the Association uses two storage cupboards in this room to store its recording, copying and administration equipment. The equipment stored is fully insured by the Association.</p> <p>The grant is paid as an internal transfer within the Council.</p>
1.8 Cost breakdown:	<p>The application is intended to directly offset the charges made by Woking Borough Council for the rent of the room referred to above and is based upon £1,781 charge for the year 2018/19 with an annual increment of 5%.</p> <p>In the past Woking Borough Council has made an internal accounting transaction so that the Grant is set off against the rent and no payment is made to or by the Association.</p>
1.9 Community Benefit	<p>The Association currently has 45 registered listeners who, but for the service provided, would not have access to local news and details of local events. If the Grant funding is continued this will allow the Association to continue to seek to expand its listener base to reach more and more citizens in the Borough as well as continue the service to existing listeners.</p> <p>The Trustees are actively engaged on programmes to increase the number of listeners through contacts with care homes, carers and relations of visually impaired persons.</p>

2.0 Financial Background	
2.1 Budget	<p>At the time of the application, the Group held £2,516 in the bank, which is reserved for the purposes of meeting future running costs along with replacing and repairing equipment. At 31 December 2018, this reserve amounted to £650, leaving some £1,866 of free reserves to meet everyday running costs.</p> <p>The Group has submitted a budget for 2020/21 which shows an anticipated income of £2,075 against an anticipated expenditure of £2,129, resulting in an anticipated deficit of £54.</p> <p>Anticipated income includes Grant from Woking Borough Council (£1,870), donations from members (£200) and bank interest (£2). Items of expenditure include rent (£1,870), insurance (£157), subscriptions (£42), website maintenance costs (£35) and printing / postage / stationery (£25).</p>
2.2 Accounts	<p>The Group has submitted accounts for 2018 which show an income of £2,204 (£3,217 in 2017) against expenditure of £2,914 (£2,963 in 2017), resulting in a deficit of £122 following a transfer of £588 to the Replacement Reserve (a surplus of £254 in 2017/18). The sum of £2,437 was carried forward at the end of the 2018/19 year.</p>
2.3 Support over the past five years	<p>2019/20 – £1,781 towards rent charged at Moorcroft 2018/19 – £1,696 towards rent charged at Moorcroft 2017/18 – £1,615 towards rent charged at Moorcroft</p>

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2016/17 – £1,537 towards rent charged at Moorcroft 2015/16 – £1,464 towards rent charged at Moorcroft
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3.0 Assessment of Application		
3.1 Key Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Constitution ○ Registered Charity ○ VAT Registered ○ Equal Opportunities Policy ○ Safeguarding Policy ○ Reserves Policy ○ Quality Mark ○ Other funding sources pursued ○ Other support by the Council ○ Fundraising ○ Two quotes ○ Regular monitoring provided previously 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yes Yes Yes Yes Yes Yes No No No Yes N/A Yes
3.2 Consultee Comments	<p><u>Jade Buckingham, Health and Wellbeing Manager</u></p> <p>We have funded the Talking Newspaper for several years and I am in support of funding it for 2020/21. The grant application has increased slightly compared to 2019/20 due to the annual increase of rental fees at Moorcroft and our funding should reflect this to ensure all rent is covered at our own premises. I would recommend that Woking Talking Newspaper be awarded the full £1,870 requested to continue this beneficial service for Woking residents.</p>	
3.3 Assessment	<p>The Woking Talking Newspaper Association was founded in 1988 to provide Woking residents who have a visual impairment access to the local newspapers through a weekly audio cassette containing local news.</p> <p>The administration team meets on a weekly basis to log the recorded memory sticks (in the form of flash drives) which have been returned by users and prepare the despatch wallets for the new recordings. The recording team meets to read and record the news from the Surrey Advertiser newspaper, producing a Master flash drive, with the aid of a producer. The reading is recorded onto a master USB thumb drive / memory stick using a sound mixer deck linked to a laptop computer. The Producer controls the recording sound levels and monitors the recording using bespoke recording software. Once handed over to the copying team, the Master flash drive is duplicated and circulated by Royal Mail to the registered listeners in wallets which are used to return them after use.</p> <p>Woking Talking Newspaper is applying for grant support of £1,870 for the financial year 2020/21. The purpose of the funding is to offset the charges levied by the Moorcroft Centre in Westfield for renting a room to prepare the recordings. The room is used for approximately four</p>	

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hours each Thursday and serves as a recording studio. In addition, the Association uses two storage cupboards in the room to store its recording, copying and administration equipment. The equipment is fully insured by the Association.

The support provided by Woking Borough Council to the Association is acknowledged at the start of the recording each week, in any communication from the Association and also on its website. Historically, the vast majority of referrals to the service have been from Sight for Surrey (previously known as the Surrey Association for Visual Impairment). Copies of the recordings have been distributed to residents in the Borough along with Woking Homes. An online version is provided through the website. In addition, a copy is provided to British Wireless for the Blind Fund.

The Association had received a significant piece of new equipment (estimated to of cost £400-£500), the donor wished to remain anonymous. It should be noted that the Trustees are actively pursuing other funding as and when the need arises.

Without the support of the Council the provision of the service would not be possible as the Group could not afford the level of commercial rents which would be levied. The number of listeners has varied over the past few years between 50 and 60, and the Group now has 46 listeners, with the Trustees actively engaged on programmes to increase the number of listeners through contacts with care homes, carers and relations of visually impaired persons.

The Council has supported the Group for many years and it is recommended that a grant of £1,870 be awarded to support this organisation.

REPORT ENDS