

CHERRY TREES – APPLICATION FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Executive Summary

This application seeks financial support for Cherry Trees, a Surrey-based Charity which supports young people with severe learning and physical disabilities by providing ‘home from home’ short break/respite care. The Charity has applied to extend its grant of £2,000 to cover the costs incurred by the Charity in providing tea visits for young people living in Woking.

Cherry Trees’ main sources of income are care services fees via a Surrey County Council local authority contract along with fundraising activities, both of which have been negatively affected by Covid-19. The care side has been impacted by increased staffing and costs for day time visits, which are not ordinarily required when schools are open. This has resulted in lower capacity levels for other visits which attract per-visit fees, reducing care income significantly. An emergency appeal has been run to generate additional funds from a wide range of supporters.

The children supported by Cherry Trees are classed as vulnerable, with over 60% having autism. They are often significantly affected by change and currently there are so many additional changes to their world. Many of their special schools are closed or, for those that are open, education and support is with a different teacher, at variable times in the week, or even at a different school where they do not know anyone. The class and timetable is also very different, as well as the activities they can do. This can be incredibly stressful for these children, impacting on their mental health and wellbeing. As a result, many parents have withdrawn their children from school even if they have a place, as the significant changes have impacted them adversely. It can affect their anxiety, resulting in challenging behaviour, impacting their appetite and quality of sleep.

Last year the Executive awarded the grant towards tea visits for disabled children based in Woking. During the first six months of the financial year, the Charity has assisted three children from Woking who received short break / respite care, reduced from six prior to the pandemic. The three children have received a total of 27 stays of 24 hours each, equating to 648 hours of care; six overnight stays equating to 102 hours of care; and one day care visit of 8 hours. Prior to the pandemic, many activities had taken place with outings and trips to venues such as the Aquarium, the seaside, Box Hill, Marwell Zoo, the Electric Theatre and Chessington World of Adventures.

In view of the above, and taking into account the specialist nature of the support the Charity provides and the Officer comments, it is recommended that the application be supported with a grant set at the same level as for 2020/21, equating to £2,000, towards the costs of the tea visits provided to disabled children from Woking over the coming year.

Recommendations

The Executive is requested to:

RESOLVE That, subject to the outcome of the Council’s budgetary process, a grant of up to £2,000 be awarded from the Community Grants Budget to cover the costs of providing tea visits to young people living in the Borough of Woking.

Reason for Decision

To support the invaluable work the Charity provides to young people in the Borough with severe learning and physical disabilities.

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| Legal Authority | S137 Local Government Act 1972 |
| Confirmation of funding | <p>This award is provisionally made on the expectation that the Council's budgets for revenue and capital projects remain at the same level allocated for the current financial year. The Council's overall budget, including the sums allocated for community grants, will be determined by Council at its meeting on 11 February 2021. In the event the grant budgets are set at the anticipated levels, confirmation of the Council's support will be sent to successful applicants. Groups should not plan for the 2021/22 funding until this confirmation has been received.</p> <p>Should the budgets be reduced as part of the Council's efforts to achieve savings to offset the impact of Covid on the Council's financial position, a special meeting of the Executive will be held to review the provisional awards and allocate the funds available on a priority basis</p> |
| 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> <p>Payments. Unless exceptional circumstances exist all invoices must be received quarterly with details of the costs incurred and monitoring information for the previous quarter. Payments will be based on the cost assumptions of the Charity and the number of tea visits organised for Woking residents.</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> <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> |
| Performance Indicators | <p>Users. The Organisation to provide a breakdown of the users in the past quarter including the number of Woking residents to benefit.</p> |

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| | <p>Activities. The Organisation to provide details of activities and events held during the last quarter.</p> <p>Publicity. The Organisation to advise how the Council's support has been publicised over the last quarter.</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>Due to the impact of Covid-19, the financial pressure on the Council's budgets is higher than ever and is expected to continue in the coming years. 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 2021/22 does not imply that a similar application in 2022/23 would be supported. In particular, it is emphasised that the Council is extremely unlikely to be in a position to award any sums above the 2021/22 levels.</p> <p>In view of this, the applicant is to be advised to ensure that contingency plans for the Group's operations for 2022/23 have been drawn up in the event that the Council is unable to continue its support beyond April 2022. 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:

2021/22 Application Form.

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2 December 2020

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| 1.0 Summary of Application | |
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| 1.1 Status and Aims | Cherry Trees has for 40 years provided ‘home from home’ short break/respice care for children and young people aged 0-19 with severe learning and physical disabilities. Because of their complex special needs, they require very specialist care often 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The aim of the Charity is to provide high quality, specialist short breaks from its centre in East Clandon. |
| 1.2 Employees | 44, comprising the Chief Executive Officer (30 hours a week), a Chief Operating Officer (13 hours per week), a Trust Manager (32.5 hours a week), a Head of Fundraising (40 hours a week), 2 x Deputy Heads of Care (totalling 37.5 hours a week), a Community and Events Organiser (40 hours a week), Fundraising Support (40 hours a week) and Carers (37.5 hours a week each). |
| 1.3 Volunteers | 100 pro-active and 140 ad-hoc, whose activities include fundraising, organising and helping at events, driving the minibuses, cooking for the children, and undertaking finance, administration, PR and health and safety activities. Assistance is also provided by companies who participate in volunteering days doing a variety of jobs, including painting, gardening, general house maintenance and charity car wash events. |
| 1.4 Clients/Users | 100, comprising: 75 male 25 female 100 disabled 33 ethnic minority 6 resident in Woking 16 aged 6-10 82 aged 11-18 2 aged 19-65 |
| 1.5 Members | None. |
| 1.6 Sum Requested | £2,000 (Revenue) |
| 1.7 Project | <p>The application is for funding to pay for tea visits for children with disabilities who reside in Woking.</p> <p>A one to one tea visit per child costs £32.66 per hour for one staff member to look after a child on a one to one basis (a two to one visit with two children to one carer is £18.77 per hour). The Charity charges the parents £10 per hour, resulting in a cost of £22.66 for every hour stay. Tea visits are usually between 2-3 hours.</p> <p>The tea visits are often a springboard to the next stage of staying for a day and then ultimately overnights, if required. Last year the Charity provided 1,072 hours through parental rate stays.</p> |

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| 1.8 Cost breakdown: | <p>Prior to Covid-19, the Charity was supporting six children from Woking who receive short break care in the form of tea visits, day care and 24 hour care.</p> <p>During the previous year, the Charity supported nine children from Woking with a total cost to the Charity of over £11,000.</p> |
| 1.9 Community Benefit | <p>The applicant has advised that Cherry Trees aims to be a model of excellence in short breaks / respite care for children and young people with physical, learning and sensory disabilities. The Charity seeks to reach out to as many families as possible, having held events such as a siblings day, two family events, an Easter party and a Christmas Party (supported by Tesco Bags of Help) where over 100 families participate in the festivities.</p> <p>Every year Cherry Trees commits to support families that are in difficult circumstances or financial need in order to provide a much needed break, even for a short 2-3 hour tea visit. 22 new children started at Cherry Trees earlier this year. In 2019/20 the Charity looked after 95 families.</p> |
| 1.10 Covid-19 Impact | <p>Cherry Trees received income from care services fees via a Surrey County Council local authority contract along with fundraising activities, both of which have been negatively affected by Covid-19. The care side has been impacted by increased staffing and costs for day time visits, which are not ordinarily required when schools are open. This has resulted in lower capacity levels for other visits which attract per-visit fees, reducing care income significantly. An emergency appeal has been run to generate additional funds from a wide range of supporters.</p> <p>The children support by Cherry Trees are classed as vulnerable, with over 60% having autism. They are often significantly affected by change and currently there are so many additional changes to their world. Many of their special schools are closed, or for those that are open; education and support is with a different teacher, at variable times in the week, or even at a different school where they do not know anyone. The class and timetable is also very different, as well as the activities they can do. This can be incredibly stressful for these children, impacting on their mental health and wellbeing. As a result, many parents have withdrawn their children from school even if they have a place, as the significant changes have impacted them adversely.</p> <p>It can affect their anxiety, resulting in challenging behaviour, impacting their appetite and quality of sleep at night. Without Cherry Trees, many children's wellbeing would have been significantly affected, as well as that of their siblings and parents. The Charity has provided free access to children's entertainers for families that are isolated and shielding as well as forwarding advice regarding well-being and health.</p> |

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| 2.0 Financial Background | |
| 2.1 Budget | At the time of the application, the Group held £4,123,249 in the bank. |

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| | <p>The sum of £38,888 is reserved for projects, repairs, kitchen refurbishment, and specialist equipment purchases.</p> <p>The Group has submitted a budget for 2020/21 which shows an anticipated income of £1,273,000 against an anticipated expenditure of £1,449,000, resulting in an anticipated deficit of £176,000.</p> <p>Anticipated income includes Local Authority Sponsorship (£693,000), Income from Charitable Trusts (£285,000), Events and Golf (£6,000) and Corporate Income (£56,000). Items of expenditure include Care Staff Costs (£822,000), Other Direct Care Costs (£217,000), Salaries (£174,000), Depreciation (£105,000) and Other Expenses (£38,000).</p> |
| 2.2 Accounts | <p>The Group has submitted accounts for 2019/20 which show an income of £1,435,590 (£1,262,286 in 2018/19) against expenditure of £1,390,098 (£1,312,674 in 2018/19), resulting in a surplus of £86,492 (a deficit of £50,388 in 2018/19). The sum of £4,267,074 was carried forward at the end of the 2019/20 year.</p> |
| 2.3 Support over the past five years | <p>2020/21 – £2,000 2019/20 – £2,000</p> |

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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 | <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>No</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>No</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>No</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>N/A</p> <p>Yes</p> |
| 3.2 Consultee Comments | <p><u>Adam Thomas, Family and Community Services Manager</u></p> <p>Cherry Trees are requesting £2,000 of revenue funds. The charity provides 'home from home' short breaks/respite care for children and young people aged 0-19 living with severe learning and physical disabilities. Based upon the community benefit provided I support this application.</p> | |
| 3.3 Assessment | <p>Cherry Trees is a large house with specially equipped facilities, play areas and garden space. It costs £1.3m a year to run. The Charity receives funding from Surrey County Council for care packages for individual children but as a Charity, Cherry Trees financially support</p> | |

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18% of every stay, an estimated sum of £546,000. The Charity provides services to the families of 95 children in Surrey and the surrounding areas.

Cherry Trees offers tea breaks through various packages, one being its parental programme offered to parents that often do not receive any funding for short breaks from the local authority. The service is offered at just £10 an hour for one to one care.

Every child on joining Cherry Trees is assessed and with the family a meaningful target relative to the child is set, for example many children arrive with a limited food palette. Feedback is sought from children, parents and professionals to improve service delivery to the highest possible level.

The children are encouraged to be involved in decision making during monthly children's meetings, for example the themes of the bedrooms or the activities they want to be involved in. Each child is also encouraged to give an opinion through speech, picture or sign. The feedback included making and cooking pasta, buying some outdoor toys for the garden and suggested books they would enjoy for World Book Day.

Cherry Trees supports 120 of the most vulnerable children in Surrey and surrounding areas and is named as an essential support measure in each of the children's Child Protection, Child in Need or Looked After Child plans. It is a lifeline to families and play a crucial role in preventing family breakdown.

It has always been a service in high demand, and anticipates that this will only be exacerbated in the current climate. Following Government guidelines, the Charity is the only current commissioned provider of short break respite care for families with children with disabilities in Surrey that has remained open since the pandemic begun. It is currently caring for the children of 38 of its most vulnerable families, supporting extra day time visits for children who are unable to attend their special school and offering emergency stays for families who have been at the point of crisis. Other visits continue but at lower capacity levels in line with updated Covid-19 risk assessments.

The Charity has applied for funding of £2,000 to cover the costs of providing tea breaks to families in the Borough. A tea visit consists of a 2 or 3 hours stay at a cost of £10 per hour for the family. The funding requested from the Borough Council would cover the remaining costs of the service (£22.66 per hour). For the children, the sessions are the equivalent of going to a friend's house for tea after school, with the event made fun and relaxed. The visits take place at the Cherry Trees property.

The Charity is regularly reviewed by Ofsted, which resulted in a 'good' rating in all areas in December 2018. Cherry Trees is the key charitable supplier of short breaks in Surrey offering support 7 day a week for 48 weeks a year. There are 14 bedrooms with, prior to the pandemic, an occupancy rate of over 85%, with 100% achieved during school holidays, and the care options available include tea visits, overnight stays, day care or 24 hour care.

It works in collaboration with other charities such as The Jigsaw Trust (specialist autism school) where children attend during the day and stay with at Cherry Trees during the evenings, weekends and

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holidays. It also works with Voluntary Action for Surrey and Family Voice.

Last year the Executive awarded the sum of £2,000 towards tea visits for disabled children based in Woking. During the first six months of the financial year, the Charity has assisted three children from Woking who received short break / respite care, reduced from six prior to the pandemic. The three children have received a total of 27 stays of 24 hours each, equating to 648 hours of care; six overnight stays equating to 102 hours of care; and one day care visit of 8 hours. During the previous year, activities took place with outings and trips to venues such as the Aquarium, the seaside, Box Hill, Marwell Zoo, the Electric Theatre and Chessington World of Adventures.

In view of the above, and taking into account the specialist nature of the support the Charity provides and the Officer comments, it is recommended that the application be supported with a grant set at the same level as for 2019/20, equating to £2,000, towards the costs of the tea visits provided to young people with severe learning and physical disabilities from Woking over the coming year.

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