

WOKING PARK BOWLS CLUB – APPLICATION FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Executive Summary

The Council has received an application from Woking Park Bowls Club for revenue funding of £15,000. The applicant has explained that the funds requested would cover the Club's normal outgoings for 2021/2022 and has been submitted in response to the impact of Covid-19 on the Club in 2020.

The Club provides a sporting and social opportunity for people of all ages from the town and its prominent position in Woking Park. The Club is charged a peppercorn rent by Woking Borough Council for the site.

As with all other voluntary and community organisations, Woking Park Bowls Club was forced to take measures in response to Covid-19 which affected the Club's income and expenditure. The application has been submitted seeking funds to cover a significant element of the Club's expenditure after May 2021, on the assumption that the Club would be receiving little or no income because of Covid-19 restrictions.

The Council Grant Scheme is not there to support Groups for current year or possible future losses as a result of Covid-19. The Group has not provided a budget for the year in which the funding would apply and so the Executive cannot take into account the anticipated income and expenditure; a list of potential costs has been provided, though the figure (£12,847) does not match the sum being sought (£15,000). It is not felt that the application has provided sufficient justification for the Council to support the application and accordingly it is recommended that the application is not supported.

Recommendations

The Executive is requested to:

RESOLVE That no grant be awarded.

Reason for Decision

It is not felt that the application has provided sufficient justification for the Council to provide funding to cover the Club's expenses in 2021/2022 on the assumption that little or no income would be received during the year as a result of Covid-19.

The Executive has authority to determine the above recommendation.

Background Papers:

2021/22 Application Form.

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1.0 Summary of Application	
1.1 Status and Aims	Founded in 1914, the aim of the Club is to provide a safe and pleasant environment and excellent playing facility for the sport of lawn bowls. The club also offers indoor “short mat” bowls in the winter months and has a bar which members can usually enjoy when there are social events at the club.
1.2 Employees	None
1.3 Volunteers	26, whose activities include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Maintaining the bowling green and the surrounding gardens. ○ Odd maintenance jobs. ○ Running social events within the club (not at present due to Covid restrictions). ○ Officers of the Club
1.4 Clients/Users	None.
1.5 Members	72, comprising: <p>41 male 31 female 0 disabled 3 ethnic minority 66 resident in Woking 0 aged 0-5 0 aged 6-10 0 aged 11-18 14 aged 19-65 58 aged 65+</p> <p>Annual membership subscriptions plus charges for social events and for playing matches</p>
1.6 Sum Requested	£15,000 (Revenue and elements of Capital)
1.7 Project	<p>The applicant has advised that the continuing impact of Covid has prevented the Club from holding any social events which raise funds to contribute to the ongoing running costs of the Club. The Club has also been unable to offer the normal competitions and hold matches against other clubs which has led to a poorer value for members and consequently the annual fee was reduced to compensate for this.</p> <p>Some “shielding” members did not renew membership, also resulting in less income.</p> <p>At the time of the application, the Club did not know whether it would be able to bowl indoors or when social events could again be held and</p>

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	<p>the bar operated. For the purposes of the application, the Club has therefore assumed that with social distancing continuing the Club would not be able to generate its normal level of income in the foreseeable future. However the Club's costs such as green maintenance will continue and the applicant has advised that the funding requested would be used to cover outgoings for the coming year.</p> <p>It is noted that Club received a grant of £5,040 from Sport England but was not eligible for the Government's business grants as the Club does not pay business rates.</p>																		
<p>1.8 Cost breakdown:</p>	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 70%;">Green maintenance and mower servicing</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£5,900</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Mower repair required immediately</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£600</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Insurances</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£1,100</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Biffa waste and cleaning mats</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£895</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Phone & internet</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£604</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Equipment and repairs</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£2,995</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sundry expenses (e.g. anti covid products)</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£583</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Honours board & trophies</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£1,700</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total excluding unexpected items</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£12,847</td> </tr> </table>	Green maintenance and mower servicing	£5,900	Mower repair required immediately	£600	Insurances	£1,100	Biffa waste and cleaning mats	£895	Phone & internet	£604	Equipment and repairs	£2,995	Sundry expenses (e.g. anti covid products)	£583	Honours board & trophies	£1,700	Total excluding unexpected items	£12,847
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<p>1.9 Community Benefit</p>	<p>The Applicant has advised that the Club's 72 members would benefit by not having to pay significantly for the Club to continue. Future members would benefit from being able to join a good and active bowls club with an excellent bowling green.</p>																		
<p>1.10 Covid-19 Impact</p>	<p>The applicant has advised that the Club has been considerably affected by the Covid-19 crisis.</p> <p>Indoor bowls was stopped in early March and there was no certainty whether there would be bowls at all over the summer. Despite this the Club managed to persuade the majority of members to pay a reduced subscription even though they did not know whether they would get any benefit. The applicant has suggested that other clubs in the town received £10k from the Council (through the Government Business Rates grants) may not have charged membership fees this year.</p> <p>The Club has managed to bowl outdoors since lockdown eased, but at much reduced capacity and with the additional expense of sanitising products.</p> <p>Some older members did not renew as they were shielding, and others were unable to join the limited activities until the beginning of August as they too were shielding.</p> <p>The Club feels that the situation has strengthened the bond that members have with the Club and each other, despite the restrictions under the Government's and Bowls England's requirements for distancing, cleansing before and after playing and limited numbers on site at any one time.</p>																		

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2.0 Financial Background	
2.1 Budget	<p>At the time of the application, the Group held £12,224 in the bank. The applicant has indicated that the funds represent a contingency for mower replacement and unexpected repairs.</p> <p>The Group has advised that it does not prepare budgets and has therefore not submitted any details of anticipated expenditure in the year for which the funding is sought.</p> <p>The Group received a grant of £5,040 from Sport England under Covid grants earlier in the summer.</p>
2.2 Accounts	<p>The Group has submitted a breakdown of income and expenditure for the year ending 30 September 2020 which shows an income of £13,847 (£18,043 in 2018/19) against expenditure of £13,877 (£24,283 in 2018/19), resulting in a deficit of £30.70 (a deficit of £6,239 in 2018/19).</p>
2.3 Support over the past five years	<p>2018/19 – £5,324 towards double glazing.</p>

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>*Discretionary rate relief and concessionary rent. The Club is located in Woking Park and Woking Borough Council is the landlord.</p> <p>The lease has a peppercorn rent and the Club does not pay business rates.</p> <p>The Club does pay the Council for insurance and is responsible for the upkeep of the whole premises, though not the fabric of the building.</p> <p>**Social functions, the bar and match fees.</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>No</p> <p>No</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>No</p> <p>No</p> <p>No</p> <p>No</p> <p>Yes*</p> <p>Yes**</p> <p>N/A</p> <p>N/A</p>

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3.2 Consultee Comments	None.
3.3 Assessment	<p>Woking Park Bowls Club has applied for revenue funding of £15,000. The applicant has explained that the funds requested would cover the Club's normal outgoings for 2021/2022.</p> <p>The Club provides a sporting and social opportunity for people of all ages from the town and its prominent position in Woking Park means that it is often a spectator point as well. The Applicant notes that the current age profile is at the upper end but that the Club always hopes to attract new members of all ages and backgrounds. The Club has existed for over 100 years.</p> <p>The Club has also been used by the U3A organisation for several years, for whom the Club has provided some coaching. The Over 50 Club has also used the green for several years, also without charge.</p> <p>The Applicant has explained that, once Covid restrictions are no longer a necessary and understandable hindrance, the Club will be able to be fully active. The Club will :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Be able to hold our usual recruitment drive every year to increase membership• Be able to run our bar and generate funds• Hold social functions to bring in funds• Restore the annual subscription to a full level• Resume matches against other clubs which yield green fee and bar income <p>The application for funding in the 2021/22 financial year has been submitted in response to the impact of Covid-19 on the Club in 2020. The amount request - £15,000 – would cover the majority, if not all, of the Club's expenditure between April 2021 and May 2022; the Club has unfortunately not provided a budget for the year so a breakdown of the anticipated income and expenditure cannot be considered by the Executive. The Club has provided a breakdown of the costs it would hope to cover through the grant of £15,000, though it should be noted that these only total £12,847. The costs include green maintenance, mower servicing, immediate mower repair, general equipment and repairs, purchase of honours board and trophies and general expenses including the purchase of sanitising products.</p> <p>At the time of the application, the Club held £12,224 in the bank which included elements for the possibility of replacing the mower and unexpected repairs. The balance sheet for the year to 30 September 2020 shows that, despite reducing the membership fee and being unable to hold all their activities, the Club managed to limit its deficit to £30.</p> <p>As with all other voluntary and community organisations, Woking Park Bowls Club was forced to take measures in response to Covid-19 which affected the Club's income and expenditure. The application has been submitted seeking funds to cover a significant element of the Clubs expenditure after April 2021, on the assumption that the Club would be receiving little or no income because of Covid-19 restrictions.</p>

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The Council Grant Scheme is not there to support Groups for possible future losses as a result of Covid-19. The Group has not provided a budget for the year in which the funding would apply and so the Executive cannot take into account the anticipated income and expenditure; a list of potential costs has been provided, though the figure (£12,847) does not match the sum being sought (£15,000). It is not felt that the application has provided sufficient justification for the Council to support the application and accordingly it is recommended that the application is not supported.

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