

LET'S READ LTD – APPLICATION FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Executive Summary

Let's Read Ltd has applied for revenue support of £12,000 in 2022/23 to assist with the costs of its literacy improvement programme. The Charity was formed to ensure that the project could, over time, cover all schools in the Borough.

The funding would be used towards the costs of the Charity, including the purchase of reading books and the training of volunteers. The project provides a book gifting scheme and a reading programme in Schools to help children maximise their start in life, and improve the overall economic wellbeing of the area. Year on year the Charity makes a huge impact in the schools it works in through the provision of 1,000 books each term to their children and the teaching of reading to over 100 children.

In light of the Council's financial situation, it is recommended that a grant of £6,000 should be awarded for 2022/23. The Charity is a local service providing essential support to primary school children requiring additional support to read, many of whom are from minority ethnic backgrounds. The income supports the training of volunteers and the purchasing of books for Woking children to learn to read. A substantial but reduced grant of 50% of the request is recommended to support the excellent work of this group.

Recommendations

The Executive is requested to:

RESOLVE That, subject to the outcome of the Council's budgetary process, funding of £6,000 be awarded from the Community Grants Budget towards the cost of the literacy improvement programme.

Reason for Decision

To support the Let's Read literacy improvement programme to improve literacy standards in the Borough.

Confirmation of funding

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 10 February 2022. 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 2022/23 funding until this confirmation has been received.

Conditions

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.

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.

Publicity. Where possible, the Organisation is required to publicise

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	<p>the support received from Woking Borough Council, including on websites and literature / leaflets produced.</p> <p>Payments. Unless exceptional circumstances exist all invoices must be received quarterly with monitoring information for the previous quarter.</p> <p>Payment Period. Final quarter 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>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.</p> <p>Activities. The Organisation to provide details of activities and events held.</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 2022/23 does not imply that a similar application in 2023/24 would be supported. In particular, it is emphasised that the Council is unlikely to be in a position to award any sums above the 2022/23 levels.</p> <p>In view of this, the applicant is to be advised to ensure that contingency plans for the Group's operations for 2023/24 have been drawn up in the event that the Council is unable to continue its support beyond April 2023. 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:

2022/23 Application Form.

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1.0 Summary of Application	
1.1 Status and Aims	<p>Let's Read Ltd was incorporated the 24th day of October 2008. It emerged from an initiative undertaken by the Sheerwater/Maybury Partnership which focussed on literacy levels in the Sheerwater and Maybury areas. In 2009, the project became an independent organisation in order to enable the literacy projects to be promoted throughout the Borough.</p> <p>The Charity seeks to advance the education of children and young people, in particular to promote literacy and develop reading and other literacy skills by collecting and distributing books and other reading materials and promoting or supporting training or other activities which are designed to promote literacy.</p> <p>The Group runs a book gifting scheme and a reading project to assist young children in primary schools learn to read.</p>
1.2 Employees	None
1.3 Volunteers	<p>31. 25 of the volunteers are tutors teaching young people to learn to read using a phonics based method. These are children who cannot read or who have struggled to learn and have fallen behind their peer groups. Identified areas of Woking have real problems with low literacy and so the Charity has targeted primary schools in these areas which highly value its contribution of working one to one with their students during the year.</p> <p>5 of the volunteers support and run the book gifting project which each term provides nearly 1,000 books to 12 schools in the Woking area. This project reaches young people many of whom who have no books to read at home.</p>
1.4 Clients/Users	<p>1,086, comprising:</p> <p>543 male</p> <p>543 female</p> <p>23 disabled</p> <p>923 ethnic minority</p> <p>1,086 resident in Woking</p> <p>1,006 aged 6-10</p> <p>80 aged 11-18</p>
1.5 Members	N/A
1.6 Sum Requested	£12,000 (Revenue)
1.7 Project	The purpose of the grant requested by Let's Read is to continue to deliver the outcomes making such a difference to the young people of Woking at a critical stage of their development as citizens of the Borough by:

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • supporting the 25+ volunteers delivering the Reading Project which helps nearly 100 young people each year; • ensuring the tutors are professionally trained, insured appropriately and have all the necessary resources to deliver successfully the Reading Programme in the four local schools supported; and • continuing the Free Book Gifting scheme to the 12 Woking Schools, thereby reaching out to those children who have no books of their own to read at home. <p>The Reading project involves working with the Head Teacher and the Literacy Co-ordinator to identify children in four targeted primary schools who are unable to read, or whose reading and comprehension is significantly behind their peer group. The four primary schools are assessed on need and reviewed on an annual basis. Each child is assessed by the Charity and an individual learning programme is followed by its tutors working one to one with these young people. Each week progress is monitored and each term the young people are reassessed. The Group also matches tutor skill sets to young people's needs, as many of the tutors have specialist skills which can achieve excellent results.</p> <p>The Book Gifting project targets selected schools to ensure that children are reached who have no books at home. A free book is provided each term to a selected year group in 12 schools in the Woking area, gifting nearly 1,000 books each term and therefore over 3,000 each year.</p>																				
<p>1.8 Cost breakdown:</p>	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 70%;">Training of Volunteers:</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£1,500</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Teaching Resources:</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£1,750</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Books for Children:</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£5,950</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Insurance:</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£350</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Postage & stationery:</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£1,260</td> </tr> <tr> <td>IT:</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£1,500</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Telephony:</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£300</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Management & Admin of Book Project:</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£5,500</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Management & Admin of Reading Project:</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£4,500</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£22,010</td> </tr> </table>	Training of Volunteers:	£1,500	Teaching Resources:	£1,750	Books for Children:	£5,950	Insurance:	£350	Postage & stationery:	£1,260	IT:	£1,500	Telephony:	£300	Management & Admin of Book Project:	£5,500	Management & Admin of Reading Project:	£4,500	Total	£22,010
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<p>1.9 Community Benefit</p>	<p>Identified areas of Woking have a real problem of low literacy, Sheerwater, Maybury, Goldsworth Park, Old Woking, Knaphill and Brookwood. The Primary Schools in these areas struggle when class sizes of 30 plus have a population of more than 65% of children who struggle to read English. These schools highly value the contribution that the Charity makes by working one to one with their students each academic year. Its support to these schools has made a measurable difference to the schools' achievements in English Key Stage 2.</p> <p>Let's Read has made a significant and measurable difference to many children and their ability to read and access learning. In a typical academic year nearly 100 children have been taught to read to their chronological age or better. These are students with English as a second language, Travellers and Army children who have had their education disrupted by the number of relocations they have experienced. Work also takes place for young people with learning difficulties who often really struggle to learn to read and so are seriously disadvantaged in later life.</p> <p>Each year over 100 young people who could not read are taught to</p>																				

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	<p>read and access learning (around 1,200 since the inception of the Charity). Poor literacy skills seriously disadvantage young people, greatly increasing their risk of under-achievement at school, truancy and social exclusion. Poor literacy in adults has been linked to unemployment, poverty, financial exclusion and offending behaviour. The Group notes that 150 young people leave Woking Primary Schools each year unable to read well enough to access learning in their Secondary Schools.</p> <p>Let's Read has demonstrated that by intervening and tackling this challenge to improve literacy amongst young people, it can help to deliver far-reaching benefits across the community:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• a increase of 100+ young people entering Secondary education who are able to access learning and improve their life chances and economic well being.• a reduction of the number of young people leaving schools identified as NEET.• raised awareness of the importance of literacy and the significant impact it has in reducing social deprivation and crime. <p>Over 1,000 young people will be given a free book each term (around 18,000 since the inception of the Charity). The book gifting scheme reaches those children who have no books of their own to read at home. Research by Nevada University has found that having just 20 books at home makes a significant difference to a child's life opportunities.</p>
1.10 Covid-19 Impact	<p>During the Covid-19 outbreak Let's Read has not been actively volunteering in schools as it has not been safe to do so. The wellbeing of volunteers and of partner school communities is of the utmost importance. Whilst Reading Tutors have been unable to visit the Schools or work with children during lockdown, several hundred books have been provided to children as part of the book gifting project.</p> <p>The effect of the missed schooling on the reading attainment of some children will be noticeable; for six or seven year olds, a gap like this represents a significant proportion of their schooling.</p> <p>While lots of children will have been enjoying quality time learning from their parents and carers, there will be many whose main carers lack the time, confidence, skills or motivation to step in where teachers have had to stand back. Disadvantaged children tend to suffer the most.</p> <p>Let's Read is committed to playing its part mending the damage caused by Covid-19 and helping children to be able to read and improve their literacy skills. The pandemic has impacted the number of volunteer tutors and office personnel with a number not expected to return. The Charity hopes that all activities can be restarted in September with refresher training for tutors alongside consideration of operating safely within schools.</p>

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2.0 Financial Background	
2.1 Budget	<p>At the time of the application, the Group held £53,000 in the bank. The sum of £11,450 is reserved as donations towards the purchase of books.</p> <p>The Group has submitted budgets for the books project and the reading project for 2022/23, which include a grant from the Council as applied for.</p> <p>The books budget for the coming year indicates a deficit of £130 based on an income of £11,538 against an expenditure of £11,668. The reading project indicates a deficit of £40 based on an income of £9,788 against an expenditure of £9,748.</p>
2.2 Accounts	<p>The Group has submitted accounts for 2020/21 which show an income of £16,535 (£22,909 in 2019/20) against expenditure of £14,289 (£18,295 in 2019/20), resulting in a surplus of £2,246 (a surplus of £3,914 in 2019/20). The sum of £58,616 was carried forward at the end of the 2020/21 year.</p>
2.3 Support over the past five years	<p>2021/22 – £10,500 2020/21 – £10,500 2019/20 – £10,500 2018/19 – £10,500 2017/18 – £10,500</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>* mandatory rate relief, discretionary rate relief, concessionary rent.</p>	<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>Yes *</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>N/A</p> <p>Yes</p>
3.2 Assessment	<p>It is recommended that a grant of £6,000 should be awarded for 2022/23. The Charity is a local service providing essential support to primary school children requiring additional support to read, many of whom are from minority ethnic backgrounds. The income supports the</p>	

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REPORT ENDS