

THE PRISON FELLOWSHIP – APPLICATION FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Executive Summary

The Prison Fellowship was established in 1979 to help prisoners to become effectively rehabilitated while in prison. Through a network of volunteers, it supports prisoners as they plan to stop offending and provides practical help through the Sycamore Tree, Angel Tree, Letter Link and Chaplaincy Support programmes. The Organisation was in receipt of funding of £18,000 from the Council’s service budgets in 2021/22 and has been asked to apply for a grant if it wished to apply to extend the funding into 2022/23.

Supporting almost all of the prisons in England and Wales, including HMP Coldingley and HMP Send in Woking, it works to counter the negative impact of crime on victims, children and families, those who commit crime and on society. It does this by offering a bridge from prison to the community, supporting desistance, introducing restorative justice, giving family support, rebuilding individual worth through non-judgemental contact and facilitating personal development and growth. It aims to make a significant difference in breaking the cycle of reoffending and helping to effectively rehabilitate offenders back into the local community to hopefully lead crime-free lives.

The Fellowship is applying for the sum of £14,400 to cover the cost of four out of the seven Sycamore Tree victim awareness courses planned to be run at HMP Coldingley and HMP Send in 2022/23. The programme teaches the principles and application of restorative justice, which asks offenders to face up to the impact of their crimes and to take responsibility for their actions. Sycamore Tree is delivered by trained and supervised volunteers who model affirming, positive behaviour. The funding would enable the rehabilitation of 80 offenders as they face up to their crimes.

It is a rehabilitative programme working for the benefit of the offender, their family and friends, their victims and the wider community that contributes towards reducing reoffending. The Prison Fellowship wants to continue effectively rehabilitating offenders back into the local community to lead a crime-free life, resulting in restored lives, strengthened family relationships and stronger, safer communities. The work contributes to the reducing reoffending priority for the Safer Woking Partnership and several of the themes in Woking’s Corporate Plan 2021-22.

The strong work undertaken by the Fellowship is acknowledged. However, in light of the Council’s financial position it is not felt that the funding awarded in previous years can be continued and it is recommended that no grant be awarded.

Recommendations

The Executive is requested to:

RESOLVE That no grant be awarded.

Reason for Decision

It is not felt that the Council can continue to support the application in light of its own financial standing.

The Executive has authority to determine the above recommendations.

The Prison Fellowship – Application For Financial Assistance

Background Papers:

2022/23 Application Form.

Reporting Person:

Julie Fisher, Chief Executive
Extn: 3301, Email: julie.fisher@woking.gov.uk

Contact Person:

Frank Jeffrey, Head of Democratic Services
Extn: 3012, Email: frank.jeffrey@woking.gov.uk
Doug Davern, Democratic Services Officer
Extn: 3018, Email: doug.davern@woking.gov.uk

Portfolio Holder:

Cllr Simon Ashall
Email: cllrsimon.ashall@woking.gov.uk

Shadow Portfolio Holder:

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

Date Published:

30 November 2021

The Prison Fellowship – Application For Financial Assistance

1.0 Summary of Application	
1.1 Status and Aims	<p>The Prison Fellowship was established in 1979 to support prisoners to become effectively rehabilitated while in prison. Through a network of volunteers, it supports prisoners as they plan to stop offending and provides practical help through the Sycamore Tree, Angel Tree, Letter Link and Chaplaincy Support programmes.</p> <p>Supporting almost all of the prisons in England and Wales, including HMP Coldingley and HMP Send in Woking, it works to counter the negative impact of crime on victims, children and families, those who commit crime and on society. It does this by offering a bridge from prison to the community, supporting desistance, introducing restorative justice, giving family support, rebuilding individual worth through non-judgemental contact and facilitating personal development and growth. It aims to make a significant difference in breaking the cycle of reoffending and helping to effectively rehabilitate offenders back into the local community to hopefully lead crime-free lives.</p> <p>For over 40 years, it has offered its services to all who request them, regardless of their gender, age, beliefs, background or abilities. It believes that no one is beyond hope, and that every life can be transformed. It aims to enable offenders to reach their full potential, resulting in restored lives, strengthened family relationships and stronger, safer communities.</p> <p><u>The programmes</u></p> <p>Sycamore Tree – A restorative justice and victim awareness course delivered to prisoners by trained volunteers. Learners explore the impact of their crime.</p> <p>Angel Tree – Volunteers enable parents in prison to send a gift to their children at Christmas, strengthening the parent-child relationship, and lessening the heartache often experienced.</p> <p>Letter Link – The letter writing programme provides hope through linking a prisoner with a trained volunteer who in turn writes letters that, in some instances, provide the only communication a prisoner receives.</p> <p>Chaplaincy Support – The volunteers support multi-faith teams in prison caring for the spiritual and emotional well-being of prisoners, and helping with prisoner rehabilitation.</p>
1.2 Employees	12, comprising Chief Executive Officer, CEO PA, Head of Finance, Finance Manager, Head of Fundraising and Communications, Trusts and Legacies Officer, Communications Officer, Supporter Care Administrator, Head of Operations, Operations Team Administrator, Programmes Administrator and Internal Moderator.
1.3 Volunteers	49, who are linked to a local Prison Fellowship group which supports their local prison. For each of the programmes, the volunteers can take roles such as tutors, group facilitators, co-ordinators, letter writers and chaplaincy support.
1.4 Clients/Users	149, comprising:

The Prison Fellowship – Application For Financial Assistance

	<p>68 male</p> <p>81 female</p> <p>15 disabled</p> <p>61 ethnic minority</p> <p>149 resident in Woking</p> <p>148 aged 19-65</p> <p>1 aged 65+</p>																
1.5 Members	N/A																
1.6 Sum Requested	£14,400 (Revenue)																
1.7 Project	<p>The Fellowship is applying for funds to cover the cost of four out of the seven Sycamore Tree victim awareness courses planned to be run at HMP Coldingley and HMP Send in 2022/23.</p> <p>The unique programme teaches the principles and application of restorative justice, which asks offenders to face up to the impact of their crimes and to take responsibility for their actions. Sycamore Tree is delivered by trained and supervised volunteers who model affirming, positive behaviour. For most learners on Sycamore Tree the most powerful element of the programme is when a victim of crime comes in to talk through how crime has impacted their life.</p> <p>The Organisation has been successfully running Sycamore Tree in both of these prisons for many years and has seen hundreds of prisoners engage with the programme, which helps them to redirect their paths away from a life of crime. This funding would enable the rehabilitation of 80 offenders as they face up to their crimes.</p>																
1.8 Cost breakdown:	<p>The following costs are incurred for each course:</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 80%;">Course Accreditation and Quality Assurance</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£444</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Course Materials</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£48</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Volunteer Costs - recruitment, training, support</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£1,452</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Administration</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£425</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Management</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£405</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Research and Development</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£287</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Central Costs</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£540</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total Cost of a Course</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£3,699</td> </tr> </table> <p>The cost of four courses (equating to the grant request) is therefore £14,400, and the cost of the planned seven courses is £25,200.</p>	Course Accreditation and Quality Assurance	£444	Course Materials	£48	Volunteer Costs - recruitment, training, support	£1,452	Administration	£425	Management	£405	Research and Development	£287	Central Costs	£540	Total Cost of a Course	£3,699
Course Accreditation and Quality Assurance	£444																
Course Materials	£48																
Volunteer Costs - recruitment, training, support	£1,452																
Administration	£425																
Management	£405																
Research and Development	£287																
Central Costs	£540																
Total Cost of a Course	£3,699																
1.9 Community Benefit	<p>This funding would enable up to 80 offenders to engage with the Sycamore Tree victim awareness programme, to consider the effects of crime and to explore ways of making restitution for the harm they have caused. Course participants will have the opportunity to gain skills relevant to life after prison and understand the pathways to help prevent a return to crime.</p> <p>Sycamore Tree delivers significant attitudinal change and participants typically demonstrate improved engagement with the prison regime.</p>																

The Prison Fellowship – Application For Financial Assistance

	<p>Learners often show a reduction in pro-criminal attitudes with increased empathy for victims and the community, increasing pro-social attitudes enabling them to feel less marginalised and more connected to society.</p> <p>It also offers the chance for these 80 men and women to gain an accredited qualification as they work through course material both during and outside of course time.</p>
<p>1.10 Covid-19 Impact</p>	<p>The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic was that a large number of volunteers could not go into prisons, in an attempt to reduce the level of traffic through the gate and thus the spread of coronavirus. The majority of in-prison activities, including Sycamore Tree, were suspended. With the country set for an extended period of lockdown, learner materials for our restorative justice programme were reviewed and updated. These materials have also been approved by the British Dyslexia Association.</p> <p>Offenders were faced with increased isolation, spending up to 23 hours of their day locked up, effectively experiencing prolonged solitary confinement. There were considerable concerns for their mental welfare with the lack of engagement in normal activities. Also, without the support of family or friends visiting, prisoners have faced stressful times not knowing the impact of Covid-19 on their loved ones. The Fellowship worked hard to continue to support prisoners despite the challenges of not always being physically present with them.</p> <p>Now, with prisons restarting aspects of daily life, the Group has been encouraged to restart Sycamore Tree and anticipates running a combined total of seven courses at HMP Coldingley and HMP Send during 2022/23.</p>

<h3>2.0 Financial Background</h3>	
<p>2.1 Budget</p>	<p>At the time of the application, the Group held £696,000 in the bank. Funds are held to meet draft Restricted funds estimated at £212,000. Losses this year are currently forecast at £138,000 and budgeted losses next year at £48,000, as it strives towards break even post-Covid. Additionally, as per the Reserves Policy, funds are held to meet three months of contractual obligations, estimated at £90,000 per month.</p> <p>The Group has submitted a budget for 2022/23 which shows an anticipated income of £693,240 against an anticipated expenditure of £741,261, resulting in an anticipated deficit of £48,381.</p>
<p>2.2 Accounts</p>	<p>The Group has submitted accounts for 2020/21 which show an income of £732,456 (£637,794 in 2019/20) against expenditure of £604,575 (£746,371 in 2019/20), resulting in a surplus of £127,881 (a deficit of £108,577 in 2019/20). The sum of £835,093 was carried forward at the end of the 2020/21 year.</p>
<p>2.3 Support over the past five years</p>	<p>New application.</p>

The Prison Fellowship – Application For Financial Assistance

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>* During 2021/22 funding of £18,000 was received from service budgets towards the Sycamore Tree programme.</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>No</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>No</p> <p>Yes *</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>N/A</p> <p>N/A</p>
3.2 Assessment	<p>This application is to run four of the planned seven Sycamore Tree programmes in HMP Send and Coldingley next year. This is a rehabilitative programme working for the benefit of the offender, their family and friends, their victims and the wider community that contributes towards reducing reoffending. The Prison Fellowship wants to continue effectively rehabilitating offenders back into the local community to lead a crime-free life, resulting in restored lives, strengthened family relationships and stronger, safer communities. This contributes to the reducing reoffending priority for the Safer Woking Partnership and several of the themes in Woking’s Corporate Plan 2021-22.</p> <p>In light of the Council’s financial position, it is not felt that the funding awarded in previous years can be continued and it is recommended that no grant be awarded. It is noted that this may affect the courses provided.</p>	

REPORT ENDS