

Agenda item 6.6 - Grants within 2020/21 budget.

In setting the budget for 2020/21 a number of grants were proposed for specific groups/organisations. The FGP is asked to consider each proposal and make a recommendation about payment of the grant.

The RFO has confirmed that any changes would need to be agreed by resolution.

1) Bodle Street Village Hall – mowing

Over recent years a contribution has been made (by way of grant) to BSG Village Hall for the mowing of the grass area. The 2020/21 budget includes a grant of £300 for this purpose. The Treasurer of the Village Hall has confirmed that there is no specific breakdown of the costs solely attributed to mowing the grass. However, he states: "In 2020, the total cost for the upkeep of the Hall and Grounds was £2,875.00 which includes £180.00 paid to contractors to cut the hedges." There is a hope from the Village Hall that the grant will be paid.

Recommendation: Grant of £300 be awarded.

2) St Mary the Virgin and St John the Evangelist – Churchyard maintenance

The budget includes £925 towards the maintenance of the churchyards. In recent years, this has been split £600/£325 with the greater amount going towards St Mary the Virgin, Warbleton.

A written email request was made to each PCC to ascertain what had been spent on Churchyard maintenance in 2020, but no reply has been received from Warbleton.

St John the Evangelist at BSG, spent £1,344 on grass cutting and maintenance of the churchyard (invoices have been provided).

Recommendation: A grant be awarded to St John the Evangelist Church, BSG – amount to be determined. A grant for St Mary the Virgin, Warbleton only to be made if information provided no later than 5th January 2021.

3) Village hall – hiring

The 2020/21 budget includes grants of £1800 to the Village Halls for usage by the Parish Council. Normally each hall receives an equivalent payment – i.e. £900 paid in 2 instalments.

Since April 2020, the Parish Council has not used either Village Hall due to all meeting being held online.

In June 2020 the Parish Council approved a grant award of £450 to each Village Hall, recognising their value to the community and the loss of income due to their closure as a result of CoVid-19, notwithstanding the lack of any usage by the Council.

Both Village Halls have confirmed that they have received a grant from Wealden DC of £10,000 due to the economic impact of CoVid-19.

It was resolved in November that Parish Council meetings for January would be held online. Realistically meetings in person (or hybrid) are unlikely to happen before late February/ March and probably later. Legally, Councils can hold meetings online until May 2021 without any legislative change.

If a hybrid meeting does go ahead, this would need to be in BSG Village Hall to allow for use of Wifi and social distancing.

The cost of holding online Zoom meetings is £14.39 per month (i.e. £172.68 per annum).

One Village Hall has said it was not be expecting a further payment.

The FGP is asked to consider whether to recommend any further grant payments to the village halls. If a payment is made, it is recommended that the "Zoom" costs are taken into account.