



South Northamptonshire VCS Forum
12th October 2017 at South Northamptonshire Volunteer Bureau (snvb)

Present

Roger Bradford, Sarah Burns, Sue Feasy, Nick King, Len Birchall, Rebecca Breakwell, Edward Frape, David Reed, Laura Patterson

Apologies

Kay Baul – Homestart, Cllr Karen Cooper

1 Welcome and Introductions

Roger Bradford (Chair) welcomed everyone to the Forum.

2 Sarah Burns Grants Officer from South Northants Council

Presentation- sent separately

In addition

Sarah explained that she had been working through a review of processes with the aim of increasing compliance. She explained that new documents would be available on the council website in the next few days.

She noted that the New Homes Bonus was the only one currently available as the others had been closed due to being fully subscribed. She explained that budgets for 2018 Community Development grants were in the process of being agreed and the sum available was likely to be similar to this year's total namely Community Development Revenue £63,000 and Community Development Capital £175,000. Sarah suggested that it was best to apply for Community Development funding earlier on in the financial year as there is no monthly limit and once the full total has been awarded there will be no more money until the following year

Sarah also stated that there is a rolling programme of grants for under £1,000 for items such as events, talented performers and training and decisions on applications will usually be provided within 5 days for this programme

Sarah stated that where an application requires letters of intent or support for co-funding they must be provided with application; both improve perception of application as a viable project. She suggested that it is better to provide too much information than not enough.

If an application is unsuccessful; groups may apply again. Also if a fundable project is not awarded a grant due to insufficient funding being available it may be held in reserve for next year.

Under the New Homes Bonus grants would be available for equipment, buildings, promotional material planting for orchards but not for revenue costs such as heating, lighting and salaries, these costs can be applied for through a revenue grant

Sarah stated that successful applicants would not receive the full grant amount immediately upfront and would need to apply for money as they needed it providing a form and invoice for each item purchased. These invoices should be paid within 7 days and in some cases could be paid on the same day. She also noted that in some situations it would be possible to make an advance payment acknowledging that cashflow would be an issue for smaller groups. If an applicant does not draw down all the money it has been awarded the remaining money will go back into the parish pot to be awarded to other groups,

Once a grant has been awarded, the most important thing is to sign and return the acceptance; this will add the project to South Northants Councils financial system. The request for payment must be made on an organisation's headed paper.

Finally Sarah explained that there would be new documents for applications available within a few days which would be accessible from the council website.

Questions in response to the presentation are detailed below:

What can we do if we don't have audited accounts?

If a group has been operating for less than 1 year and has no audited accounts, management accounts would be acceptable

Do three quotes have to be provided all items?

3 quotes are always required for any expenditure, to prove best value, unless the application is for specialist equipment where there would not be multiple suppliers, in this case justification would need to be made to the reason for there being only 1 quote

If a small group does not have its own bank account can it still apply?

If a small organisation does not have its own bank account it is possible for the money to be paid through the bank account of another reputable organisation associated with that group (i.e. a parish council).

What happens if an application involves a project which operates across several parishes?

If multiple parishes are involved in an application for a project the money can be apportioned across all the parishes if they still have funds available.

3 Information Exchange

Nick King: snvb

Nick explained that Village Networks involved going out into isolated rural communities with experts to give a variety of advice to individuals including universal credit; legal matters and debt. This allows individuals to access advice in their own community. He stated that the project was due to come to an end in January and that he was waiting to hear the outcome of an application to the Big Lottery for continuation funding for another 4 years.

Nick explained that the Rural Information Centre (RIC) vehicle provided 2 separate rooms, computer access and wifi and is available for hire by voluntary organisations. He mentioned that he was negotiating the use of the vehicle for mobile flu vaccinations. Nick also mentioned the Community Mini Bus service which provides a mini bus and driver to local groups: costs are calculated based on diesel and driver time. He stated that vehicles are booked on a first come first served basis and are available to organisations in Northamptonshire, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire who register with the service. There is no charge to register. He suggested that if anyone were interested in either service to get in touch with him.

Roger Bradford: Chair

Roger asked those present to let him know what they would find useful or interesting to hear about through future forum meetings.

Rebecca Breakwell: Northamptonshire Acre

Rebecca explained that the Good Neighbour scheme provided low level support to individuals allowing them to live independently for longer, providing support such as shopping and form filling. A scheme co-ordinator identifies the needs and a volunteer provides the necessary support. This scheme does not replace work that would otherwise be done by others but generates support and a sense of community. Rebecca also mentioned a free Good Neighbour event on 21st November (11.30-15.30) in Moulton. See <http://northantsacre.org.uk/good-neighbour-schemes-launch>

David Reed: British Legion and Towcester Rotary

David explained that the British Legion was looking for volunteers to help with poppy selling between October 28th and November 11th. There were arrangements in place with Waitrose and Tesco to host the volunteers. He noted that staff from South Northants Council and Tesco would also be selling poppies.

Sue Feasy: Tove Valley Baptist Fellowship

Sue explained that building of the new centre will begin in spring/summertime 2019 and that they are keen to talk to local people and groups about how they would like to use the building. There will be a fundraiser in post from January to apply for grants. Nearly £2m has been raised so far from the congregation and fundraising events. Plans are complete and there has been an archeological survey. There are potential plans for a large theatre with modern audio visual equipment which will seat around 450 people. There will also be additional smaller rooms, a crèche and tea making facilities in the first phase, followed by a larger kitchen later.