

ABINGDON-ON-THAMES TOWN COUNCIL

COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE TUESDAY 17th DECEMBER 2019

REPORT OF THE TOWN CLERK

AGENDA ITEM 6: GRANT APPLICATIONS

Supplementary item to report already issued page 17 of main agenda

Part B: Grant applications in relation to the former Joint Environmental Trust

Abingdon Joint Environmental Trust (JET) was a joint committee of the Vale of White Horse District Council and Abingdon Town Council and included co-opted members who sometimes represented other local organisations. The Trust came to an end in May 2011 and the remaining funds were transferred to the Town Council on condition that they were used for the same purposes as the Trust had previously supported. The funds were transferred as a grant from the District Council to the Town Council "to enable Abingdon Town Council to fund environmental improvement schemes which will enhance and sustain the vibrant market town". Under the agreement with the District Council the service objectives and specifications are stated as "to help preserve the best of the physical character of Abingdon and to help improve its environment hence enhancing and sustaining a vibrant market town." The criteria for the making of the different grants is attached to this report and for completeness it should be noted that there is also provision for grants in relation to shopfronts.

The funds remaining in relation to the former Joint Environmental Trust amount to £31,139. Under the agreement the Town Council must consult with the local district councillors before any awards are made.

When the District Council ceased funding the JET and handed the balances over to the Town Council, the Town Council continued funding and there is an additional sum of £10,000 in the earmarked reserve towards similar JET environmental projects.

The following applications have been brought forward to the Committee for consideration under the Joint Environmental Trust:

1. St Nicolas' Church Tower, urgent repairs to the church tower to preserve its historic fabric and enable the bells to ring out once more. The sum requested is £2,000. This will be subject to confirmation of the Council's powers in relation to this matter.
2. Abingdon War Memorial. An application from the Town Council for grant funding to undertake repairs and replacement of certain items, the request being 50% of the costs up to a maximum grant of £11,000.

3. The Albert Memorial (Abingdon) Trust. Please see attached application in the for grant aid of any expenditure on the project which is in excess of £24,500

Please also see section B of report in relation to the grant application by the Friends of Abingdon Building Trust.

The Committee is requested to consider the grant applications for JET funding and make a recommendation which will then be subject to consultation with district councillors. Following consultation the applications will then be referred to the Finance and General Purposes Committee.

Nigel Warner
Town Clerk
13th December 2019

FUNDS IN RELATION TO THE FORMER ABINGDON JOINT ENVIRONMENTAL TRUST

Criteria for the making of environmental grants

1. Schemes should be of benefit to the general public and therefore, if not on publicly owned land, they should be readily visible from a public place, road or footpath.
2. Grants can be made to voluntary organisations and local authorities as well as private owners, but it is unlikely that they will be offered to private commercial concerns with large resources. Preference will be given to properties in residential use.
3. Grants will not normally exceed 20% of the total cost of the works considered eligible for grant aid, or £1,500, whichever is the lesser sum. In most cases a smaller grant will be offered.
4. Under no circumstances can grants be made available towards schemes which have been carried out or which have been started at the time of the application.
5. Applications for grant aid will only be considered if the appropriate application has been completed to the satisfaction of the clerk.

Criteria for making grants towards building works

1. The building should normally be included in the Statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest and be either located within the designated Conservation Area, or if not, it should form part of a well defined architectural or historic group, or make a significant contribution to its setting.
2. Grants will normally only be made available towards major structural repair work; such items include repair to roofs, stonework, brickwork, repointing, chimneys and rain water goods etc.
3. Facelifts, external decorations and other minor works will only be eligible for grant aid where they result from structural repairs to the exterior of the building, or where the council is satisfied that they will bring about a significant environmental improvement.
4. Internal works will not normally be eligible for grant aid unless they result from structural repairs to the exterior or are vital to the preservation of the structure.
5. Grants will not normally be offered towards routine maintenance work, conversions, adaptations, modernisation or the provision or renewal of services.
6. Financial assistance for restoration will usually only be given for work intended to put the whole structure into a good state of repair.

7. Preference will normally be given to properties in residential use and applicants who have owned the property for a period of not less than 3 years prior to the submission of the grant application.
8. An applicant will be required to declare that he/she does not intend to sell the property within a period of six years dating from the payment of the grant. In the event of the property being sold within six years from the date of payment the grant will be repaid in full. This condition would not necessarily apply to environmental schemes and non-profit making organisations, and in certain other circumstances this requirement can be waived.

General Criteria

1. Approved grants become payable on completion of the work provided that the council is satisfied that the standard of work complies with that specified in the application. The council must be kept informed, if for any reason it becomes necessary to alter the specification either before or during the course of work, and must agree to such alterations.
2. In approving any works for payment of grant the council does not accept any liability arising from any deficiency in design, workmanship, materials or from any other cause.
3. Where appropriate, applicants must ensure that the requirements of statutory undertakers and local authorities are met and complied with.
4. Where appropriate, the council may require an applicant to agree to erect a small plaque bearing the council's name to commemorate the contribution.

Abingdon-on-Thames Town Council

Grant Application Form - Part A - for committee review

Please ensure you also fill in Part B and send it in with this form to enquiries@abingdon.gov.uk

A1. Your organisation.

Name of the organisation
requesting the grant:

St Nicolas Church, Abingdon-on-Thames

State briefly the purpose/objectives of the organisation:

The church is a place of worship and silent prayer but also provides services to the wider community, including drop-in-facilities on weekday mornings for rest, refreshment and fellowship. These are valued by the elderly, young mothers and some local residents with mental health problems. We also host concerts, exhibitions and meetings open to all.

A2. Your grant request.

Describe the project for which the grant is needed.

We are seeking Grant Funding to assist with urgent repairs to the Church tower, preserving its historic fabric and enabling the bells to ring out once more.

At the end of September 2019, just before Sunday Service and during bell ringing, a piece of masonry dislodged from the tower and fell inside the church. The initial investigation showed some significant cracks in the stone work and considerable movement of the tower when the bells are rung. Full pealing of the bells has therefore been suspended and there is no danger to the public. In order to keep the tower safe in the future and to be able to peal the bells again, the damage has to be repaired as soon as possible.

What is the total cost of the project?	In excess of £12,000. This is the estimate given to us by the architect. £5,000 is for the survey work and professional fees and the rest for the remedial work shoring up the tower.
How much grant are you seeking?	£ 2,000
What percentage of the total cost are you seeking via this grant?	Approximately 20%

<p>How will you be raising the rest of the money for the project?</p>	<p>Grant application to Oxfordshire Historic Churches Trust, additional fund raising activities, one of our own restricted funds (Blacknall)</p>
<p>Show roughly how the costs of the project are broken down.</p>	<p>We have already committed to £5,000 in professional fees and structural reporting. The rest is for the remedial work. At present we are going with the best estimate of the architect.</p>

What fund-raising have you undertaken for this project or others in the past 2 years?

This is an unexpected expenditure, and we are only now starting fundraising towards the cost, the funds raised at our Extravaganza opening (30 November) have been earmarked for the project.

We also have access to a restricted fund - purely for work to the fabric of the church - although this has been much depleted recently as we have carried out considerable repairs to the external stonework (facing the Market Place) and installed a new heating system and chairs for the benefit of both congregation and our many visitors.

Generally, we depend on generous donations by church members (see section A5) in order to be able to keep the church open daily for the benefit of the community and provide a year round venue for local events.

Specific fundraising events over the past 2 years for our needs include:

- Abingdon Extravaganza, when we are open all day offering music, refreshments, children's activities and items for sale
- Book and cake sale/ coffee morning twice a year on a Saturday morning
- Sale of postcards/ small merchandise throughout the year
- Hire of church building for concerts, sales, exhibitions etc with special rates for local organisations / charities

Some of the fund-raising activities mentioned have been held to start fund-raising for a major upgrade to our toilet block, to enable disabled access and provide disabled facilities, and more are planned for 2020. This will complete our project to improve community access which was started with the very successful re-ordering of the back of the church when we replaced some of the pews with flexible seating, i.e. stacking chairs, and for which we were delighted to receive Grant assistance from both the Town and District councils.

A3. Local benefit.

How many people take part in your organisation's activities? Give local branch numbers if you are a national organisation.

as members

70+

p. as recipients

More than 6,000 visits per year

Please fill in the table below relating to numbers of members and/or recipients falling into each category. Estimates are acceptable provided an "e" is put after the figure.

age profile	0-16	16-65	over 65

members	3	27	40
recipients	5%	45%	50%
gender profile	male	female	
members	25	45	
recipients			
local connection	town resident	attend school in town	neither resident nor attending school in town
members	66	3	4
recipients	75%		25%

Note: Recipient figures and percentage breakdown are estimates only

A4. Other/previous grant awards.

Please list below any grant awards from this council, other councils and large organisations made in the past three years.	Please list any grant applications to other councils or bodies on which you are awaiting the result.
No awards for this project to date 2017: £1,990 from Abingdon Town Council £3,000 from Vale of White Horse District Council for chairs	This is our first application but will apply to Oxfordshire Historic Church Trust shortly

A5. Further detail about your organisation: *Please provide your last set of accounts and the most recent bank statement.*

Please Note:

As a charity St Nicolas' has a number of Restricted Funds where the donors have designated the purposes for which funds may be used

How is your organisation run?

Day to day management by the District Church Council (all volunteers), under the umbrella of Parochial Church Council (also volunteers), as part of Church of England

What is the balance in the club account on the most recent bank statement?

£17,000

How much do you charge your members or attendees in subscriptions/fees and how much does this raise each year?

We make no charge; members donate as much as they feel able. Visitors, whether to our services or the building, are invited to make a donation, but there is no obligation. No one is excluded from our welcome.

In 2018 Members contributed over £30,000, through planned giving, to maintain the church building, keep the church open daily, making the building available for specific other events, and for the running of our regular and occasional Services.

Voluntary donations from members and visitors raised a further £ 17,000

Fundraising efforts, such as those listed above, contributed a further £7,000

Of our 2018 **unrestricted** income of £56,000 over £34,000 was remitted to the Diocese in payment of the Parish Share. Total unrestricted expenditure was around £56,000 - a deficit on the year of £1,700.

Other major items of expense were utility and other running costs, and our Verger's salary, all of which are part of the cost of our being open daily for the benefit of community and visitors.

CIVIC ACTIVITIES

St Nicolas' is one of three Anglican Churches in the centre of Abingdon. Its tower contributes hugely to the street-scape of the Market place and is a familiar landmark of Abingdon.

The Town Clock has been hosted in the tower for, we believe, over 170 years. The clock is maintained by the Town Council.

Change Ringing is a nationally acclaimed, and rather unique, activity - which contributes week to week to British culture. St Nicolas has an historic ring of 6 bells (cast by Abel Rudhall in 1741) which are rung for Services (Sunday by Sunday, and for Weddings and Funerals) and for events of local and national civic importance. This year, for example, the bells were rung to mark the fire at Notra Dame, to mark the Funeral of PC Andrew Harper, and to ring-in the New Year. The bells are also rung for Bun Throwing.

Recognising our strategic position on the Market place, we try to be open for part of each day to offer a place of hospitality and welcome.

Visitors to this include those looking for a place of quiet and prayer, people interested in the history of the building, and those seeking companionship and refreshment.

Amongst our regular visitors are a number of vulnerable adults, including those with mental health issues who find acceptance and fellowship.

All are assured of an open welcome

In addition to our weekday opening, and our many church based activities (including Sunday Services, occasional services, weddings, carol services etc - all of which are open to all - townspeople and visitors alike) we also offer facilities for the wider community:

- A local Cancer Support Group meets monthly
Beneficiaries mostly townspeople
- Regular Friday market of local produce and craft
Beneficiaries mostly townspeople
- A venue for the annual Cards for Good Causes sale, and for other charities' sales / coffee mornings etc
Beneficiaries include townspeople and visitors, and local charities
- A venue for regular Sunday concerts (10 per year)
Beneficiaries include townspeople and visitors
- A venue for other concerts - often arranged by local music schools for the benefit of their pupils
Beneficiaries mostly townspeople
- Venue for exhibitions eg Artists, Peace Group
Beneficiaries mostly townspeople
- Small meeting place for local groups
Beneficiaries mostly townspeople
- Practice venue for local musicians
Beneficiaries mostly townspeople
- Abingdon Film Society Silent Film night
Beneficiaries mostly townspeople

We also arrange to be open for tours by interested parties, e.g. local schools, visiting history societies, and for the various civic bank holiday walks

Beneficiaries include townspeople and visitors

We do not have accurate visitor numbers, nor counts of recipients / beneficiaries, however we estimate that we host over 6,000 visits (note not visitors) per year. This count does not include church members and others who attend only for church services (Sundays, Easter & Christmas, Special Services , Weddings, Baptisms etc)

Some of our visitors stay for only a few minutes as they visit Historic Abingdon, others are regular guests for whom the church provides a place of non-judgemental welcome and respite. Still others come for specific events.

Abingdon War Memorial

Request for Funding from the Joint Environmental Trust

The War Memorial is a Grade 2 listed monument and was erected in 1921, paid for by public subscription in memory of those who lost their lives in World War One. Later inscriptions were added in memory of those who fell in the Second World War with the last inscription being added in 2004 for a member of the armed forces who died in the Northern Ireland conflict. In 2015 a decision, by the Town Council, was made not to add further inscriptions to the memorial and, if required, further thought should be given to another memorial.

In November 2010 there was a major refurbishment with the area being repaved, flower beds replaced by trees and the memorial was underpinned using a new method of pumping a type of resin underneath to try and rectify or stop the tilt it had developed.

The total cost of the project was £89,000 with a grant from the Joint Environmental Trust of £20,000 (22% of total cost).

Work was not undertaken to refurbish the War Memorial itself in 2010, for budgetary reasons. However, it has now become evident that work needs to be carried out in order to conserve the memorial.

Andrew Townsend Architects, Marlborough House, Faringdon, who specialise in the conservation of historic buildings have been tasked to look at the War Memorial with a view to repair and replacement of certain items on it. Although the report is not yet finished an estimate has been given of £22,000 which includes scaffolding, lead capping, provision of new sections and re-engraving. All carried out by skilled stonemasons and stone conservators.

The Town Council would therefore wish to apply for a grant from the Joint Environmental funds for work to be undertaken on the War Memorial. The Town Council would like to apply for 50% of the total costs up to a maximum of £11,000, to ensure work is undertaken on this very important monument within the town centre.

S. F. Rich

Asst. Town Clerk / Head of Services

11 December 2019

Grant application from the Albert Memorial (Abingdon) Trust

The Albert Memorial is located in Albert Park. The Park is central to the Albert Park Conservation Area and is Grade 2 listed. The Albert Memorial was built between 1863 and 1864 as a memorial to Queen Victoria's husband, Prince Albert and was built by public subscription. As a memorial built by public subscription its ownership was in doubt for many years and by the 1990s it required substantial repairs to avoid it falling in to disrepair. In 1998 the Abingdon Joint Environmental Trust (JET) awarded a grant of £10,500 to enable repairs to take place and in 1999 the Albert Memorial (Abingdon) Trust was established with the objective "to preserve and administer" the Albert Memorial.

There are three parties to the Trust: Abingdon Town Council, Christ's Hospital of Abingdon and the Vale of White Horse District Council. These bodies all have a legal obligation to ensure that the objective of the Trust is met and each year they make a contribution towards the Trust. The current annual contribution given by the parties to the Trust is £800 each. This is used to pay for inspections, architectural advice, maintenance and repairs.

Following the major works which took place in 1998 there has been an inspection of the Memorial every five years and this results in an action plan for repairs and maintenance, with a view to keeping the Memorial in good order and to avoid the major works and expenditure required previously.

In 2017 the Trust requested tenders to undertake works which were highlighted in the latest inspection report. The report highlighted the need to undertake remedial works to the stonework of the memorial over the course of the next five years. At that stage the Trustees did not consider that these were urgent and works were deferred.

At their meeting in September 2019 Trustees reviewed matters and following a site visit by the Chair of Trustees and Oliver Wilson of Andrew Townsend Architects, the specification of works will be put out to tender again early in 2020 so that necessary works can be undertaken in the spring. The Trustees are seeking to reduce costs through the re-tendering exercise and in particular the costs of scaffolding.

The Trust's accounts for the year ended 31st December 2018 show an end of year balance of £23,907 and it is projected the balance at the end of 2019 will be £25,583. Whilst the Trust has a good balance in hand, saved over many years to meet the ongoing costs of maintaining the memorial, the anticipated costs may be such that it is necessary to seek grant funding from the JET in order to expedite the works as it was learnt in the 1990's that delaying necessary maintenance can cause the final cost to increase significantly.

The annual running costs of the Trust are approximately £1,000 and therefore the grant request is that, in order to maintain adequate working balances, the JET funds any costs of the work in excess of £24,500, the final grant being approved by the Chair and the Vice Chair of the Community Services Committee following receipt of tenders.

Cllr Jim Halliday,
Chair Albert Memorial (Abingdon) Trust.