



**Reading**  
Borough Council  
Working better with you

## DECISION BOOK

**Issue: 645      Date: 27 OCTOBER 2021**

Decisions set out in the book have been made under delegated powers by the Chief Executive, Executive Directors or the Chief Finance Officer and Monitoring Officer, in consultation either with the relevant committee or Lead Councillor.

This issue of the decision book will be in public circulation up until **Saturday 6 November 2021**. During that period three Councillors may request in writing to the Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services that a decision should be referred either to a committee, or to the Council (as appropriate) for formal resolution.

The decision book is open to public inspection at the Civic Offices between 9.00 am and 5.00 pm, Mondays to Fridays and can be accessed on the Council's website -

<https://democracy.reading.gov.uk/mgListOfficerDecisions.aspx?bcr=1&BAM=0>

The officer reports accompanying the decisions are attached.

|                 |                         |  |
|-----------------|-------------------------|--|
| <b>Contact:</b> | <b>Richard Woodford</b> | <b>Committee Services</b>  |
|                 | <b>Tel:</b>             | <b>0118 937 2332</b>   |
|                 | <b>e-mail:</b>          | <a href="mailto:richard.woodford@reading.gov.uk">richard.woodford@reading.gov.uk</a> |

## DECISION BOOK - ISSUE 645 - 27 OCTOBER 2021

### 1. AWARD OF READING BOROUGH COUNCIL SMALL GRANTS FUND AND COVID-19 - START-UP / RE-START GRANTS FOR COMMUNITY GROUPS 2021/22

| <u>DECISION</u>  | <u>LEAD COUNCILLOR(S)</u> | <u>WARDS AFFECTED</u> | <u>PAGE NO.</u> |
|--|---------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|
| 1. AWARD OF READING BOROUGH COUNCIL SMALL GRANTS FUND AND COVID-19 - START-UP / RE-START GRANTS FOR COMMUNITY GROUPS 2021/22 | COUNCILLOR MCEWAN         | BOROUGHWIDE           | 1               |

This report sets out the decision to award grants totalling £100,000, to 22 organisations, from the Reading Borough Council Small Grants Fund 2021/22; and grants totalling £44,248 to 27 organisations from the Covid-19 - Start-up/re-start grants for community groups 2021/22 fund.

It is the decision of the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Corporate and Consumer Services to award grants totalling £100,000, from the Reading Borough Council Small Grants Fund 2021/22 as listed in Appendix 1; and to award grants totalling £44,248 from the Covid-19 - Start-up/re-start grants for community groups 2021/22 fund as listed in Appendix 2.

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE

|                         |   |                |  |
|-------------------------|---|----------------|--|
| <b>LEAD COUNCILLOR:</b> | COUCNILLOR MCEWAN - LEAD COUNCILLOR FOR CORPORATE AND CONSUMER SERVICES   |                |  |
| <b>DATE:</b>            | 27 OCTOBER 2021   |                |  |
| <b>TITLE:</b>           | AWARD OF READING BOROUGH COUNCIL SMALL GRANTS FUND AND COVID-19 - START-UP / RE-START GRANTS FOR COMMUNITY GROUPS 2021/22 |                |  |
| <b>SERVICE:</b>         | POLICY AND FUNDING  | <b>WARDS:</b>  | BOROUGHWIDE  |
| <b>AUTHOR:</b>          | CLARE MUIR  | <b>TEL:</b>    | 0118 9372119/72119   |
| <b>JOB TITLE:</b>       | POLICY AND VOLUNTARY SECTOR MANAGER   | <b>E-MAIL:</b> | <a href="mailto:Clare.muir@reading.gov.uk">Clare.muir@reading.gov.uk</a> |

**1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This report sets out the decision to award grants totalling £100,000, to 22 organisations, from the Reading Borough Council Small Grants Fund 2021/22 (Appendix 1); and grants totalling £44,248 to 27 organisations from the Covid-19 - Start-up / re-start grants for community groups 2021/22 fund (Appendix 2).
- 1.2 The Council allocated £100k for small grants to the voluntary and community sector for the year 2021/22 for community-led activities addressing the impact of poverty and supporting mental well-being in Reading's most deprived neighbourhoods and communities.
- 1.3 Additionally, £50k of the CEV (Clinically Extremely Vulnerable) funding from the Government was allocated for Start-up / re-start grants for community groups to facilitate people, including people who may have been identified as Clinically Extremely Vulnerable, to regain community connections where they may have already undergone lengthy periods of self-isolation, or who may be required to self-isolate in future and may be at risk of loneliness and social isolation.
- 1.4 Appendices
  - 1.4.1 Appendix 1 - List of Reading Borough Council Small Grants Fund 2021/22 awards
  - 1.4.2 Appendix 2 - List of Covid-19 - Start-up / re-start grants for community groups 2021/22 awards
  - 1.4.3 Appendix 3 - Equality Impact Assessment
  - 1.4.4 Appendix 4 - Small Grants Fund 2021/22 Guidance to applicants and Covid-19 - Start-up / re-start grants guidance for applicants

## 2. DECISION

- 2.1 It is the decision of the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Corporate and Consumer Services to award grants totalling £100,000, from the Reading Borough Council Small Grants Fund 2021/22 as listed in Appendix 1; and to award grants totalling £44,248 from the Covid-19 - Start-up/re-start grants for community groups 2021/22 fund as listed in Appendix 2.

## 3. POLICY CONTEXT

3.1.1 Policy Committee February 2020 agreed as part of the Council's budget for 2020-21 to allocate an ongoing £100k for small grants to the voluntary sector.

3.1.2 For the 2021-22 round the funding was directed towards community-led activities that support thriving communities: addressing the impact of poverty and supporting mental well-being in Reading's most deprived neighbourhoods and communities. With the rationale that:

- We have pledged in our [Corporate Plan](#), that we will focus on the needs of the most vulnerable, ensuring young people, older people, those with long term health conditions or disabilities and those most affected by Covid-19 get the help they need to live successful, independent lives in vibrant, thriving communities.
- The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) 2019 shows that there are 5 areas of Reading that are in the 10% most deprived areas of the country. These are located in Whitley, Church, Southcote and Norcot wards.
- We also know that nationally, ethnic minority populations, especially Black, Pakistani and Bangladeshi residents, are more likely to live in areas of deprivation. In Reading the areas with the highest populations of Black, Pakistani and Bangladeshi residents are in Battle, Katesgrove, Park and Minster wards, which do not show up as the highest deprivation areas in the IMD so there is possible hidden poverty in these areas.

3.1.2 Grants of up to £5,000 - increased to £10,000 for joint bids were available to support the infrastructure and/or additional capacity needed by organisations to expand existing service, deliver services in a different way or to develop new services.

3.1.3 As part of the COVID-19 response the Government provided two grant funding streams (The COVID-19 Clinically Extremely Vulnerable Support Grant and the LA Framework / Practical Support Grant for those self isolating) to local authorities developed aimed at assisting local authorities to support residents during periods of self-isolation. Both funding streams are in the form of unringfenced Local Government Act, 2003, Section 31 grant - stated to be the chosen mechanism so as to provide maximum flexibility. The Council allocated £50k of this grant for Start-up / re-start grants for community groups. Organisations could apply for up to £1,000 per group starting up or restarting. The funding was aimed at community group meetings or activities that facilitate people, including people who may have been identified as Clinically Extremely Vulnerable to regain community connections where they may have already undergone lengthy periods of self-isolation, or who may be required to self-isolate in future and may be at risk of loneliness and social isolation.

3.1.4 Both funds were advertised and administered concurrently. Applications were through an online form with guidance for applicants. The funding window was open from 14<sup>th</sup> June to 25<sup>th</sup> July 2021.

3.1.5 80 Small Grant Fund and 40 Start-up / re-start applications were received.

3.2 The grants were assessed against the criteria for set out the guidance to applicants (Appendix 4).

#### **4. THE DECISION**

4.1 A Grants panel comprising the Assistant Director for Corporate Improvement and Customer Services, Assistant Director for Housing and Neighbourhoods and the Policy and Voluntary Sector Manager assessed the applications 4.2 The panel awarded Small Fund grants to 22 organisations as shown in the table at Appendix 1.

4.3 It awarded 45 Start-up / re-start grants of up to £1,000 to 27 organisations, as shown in the table at Appendix 2. These included 8 unsuccessful applications to Small Fund Grant which were considered more suitable for Start-up / re-start grants.

#### **5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS**

5.1 This decision supports the [Corporate Plan](#) to focus on the needs of the most vulnerable, ensuring young people, older people, those with long term health conditions or disabilities and those most affected by Covid-19 get the help they need to live successful, independent lives in vibrant, thriving communities.

#### **6. ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 This policy is assessed as Net Nil impact.

#### **7. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION**

7.1 The funding opportunity was communicated via press release and via email through a network of voluntary and community groups covering neighbourhood groups, groups representing equality and cohesion interests, advice services, children and young people voluntary and community organisations, including SEND, culture and arts groups, community buildings, disability, older people, carers groups, RBC Grant recipients, health and wellbeing groups, Black and Minority ethnic and religious groups.

#### **8. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

8.1 The Equality Duty is relevant to the decision. An Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out and is provided at Appendix 3. No negative impact is identified.

#### **9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 The Local Authority has powers to make grant funding under the Localism Act 2011, Section 1 - general power to do anything that individuals generally may do

9.2 Equality Act 2010, section 149 placed a duty on the local authority to have regard to need to eliminate discrimination; advance equality of opportunity between persons sharing relevant characteristic and those who do not.

- 9.3 Health and Social Care Act 2012, section 12 places a duty to take appropriate steps for improving the health of people in area (information and advice, services or facilities to promote healthy living etc. including providing grants or loans
- 9.4 The COVID-19 Clinically Extremely Vulnerable Support Grant and the LA Framework / Practical Support Grant for those self isolating are unringfenced Local Government Act, 2003, Section 31 grant.

## **10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The £100k for small grants to the voluntary sector is within the current budget. £50k of the COVID-19 Clinically Extremely Vulnerable Support Grant and the LA Framework / Practical Support Grant for those self isolating was allocated for Start-up / re-start grants.

## **11. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 11.1 Grant applications for Small Grants Fund and Covid-19 - Start-up / re-start grants for community groups 2021/22
- 11.2 Grants Panel assessment papers

## Reading Borough Council Small Grants Fund 2021/22 - Awards

| Organisation  | Awarded<br>£ | Purpose   |
|---|--------------|---|
| Baker Street Area Neighbourhood Association (BSANA) | 5000         | To bring diverse community together through a variety of targeted activities, to strengthen the community after Covid. To draw out lonely people and diverse cultures, through targeted communications, fun events and Annual Clean-up. Offering news and information through fun street party with stalls from environmental groups, the Police and Streetcare; newsletters to let people know how to get the Covid recovery help they need and the tools they need to get on and enjoy their life in our neighbourhood.   |
| Centre Skills Sports CIC                            | 5000         | To provide an additional evening of training on Friday evenings at the Ranikhet Academy School Astro turf sports pitch. Centre Skills Sports CIC (CSS), is a community-focused social enterprise, developed for accessible and affordable sport for children within the disadvantaged communities in the Central and West Reading communities, who might otherwise be unoccupied outside school. Many of the children we provide for come from ethnic minorities, low income and lone parent families.  |
| Chapter2  | 5000         | To provide additional capacity for a mentoring programme for boys growing up with an absent father. Chapter2 has a waiting list of of 50 in Reading. Each mentor supports one mentee on a one to one basis, to ensure they have the capacity for a consistent, weekly session. Activities for the mentees and mentors include Away Days as an effective way to reach disadvantaged and underprivileged young people, providing them with opportunities for fun activities they might otherwise not have, and can look forward to as fun activities, forming part of their overall motivation for engaging with the mentoring programme. |
| Christian Community Action                          | 5000         | To enhance and improve the service by setting up a monthly support and focus group for service users. The aim of the group is to: better understand the experiences and issues faced by CCA's client group, improve and develop the services to ensure they are relevant and responsive to the needs of people in the community. To support group members to gain confidence and overcome barriers to employment by providing support and mentoring to engage in community activities and play a positive role in the community.  |
| Churchend School PTA                                | 5000         | To provide extra-curricular clubs, lessons and activities for disadvantaged and vulnerable children (the school catchment area is amongst the 10% most deprived neighbourhoods in the country) to increase their skills, confidence, and independence in experiences they do not have access to/opportunities for at home due to low income/poverty.  |

| Organisation                                   | Awarded £ | Purpose  |
|--|-----------|--|
|  |           | To help build relationships between children and develop social and emotional skills, support mental well-being, collaborating in team activities and/or individual skills/knowledge.<br>To provide physical activities/sports sessions; music/dance lessons; termly gardening club; cooking club; arts/crafts club; library/book club; board games club   |
| Fellowship Educational Society                 | 5000      | A community hub supporting over 120 migrant families in Reading so that they can overcome distress, depression and anxiety derived from their immigration process; integrate into the country; and improve their skills to find suitable employment opportunities. The hub is led by service users who have lived experience of the issues. All of them come from a BAME background and aware of the challenges in their local communities.  |
| First Days Children's Charity                  | 5000      | To provide support with essential items to 109 children living in Reading who are living in poverty or whose families are experiencing financial hardship. This could be the provision of safe sleeping equipment (cots, cotbeds, Moses baskets, sheets and mattresses), newborn clothing and equipment, items to be safe out and about such as car seats and prams, essential school items including uniform and reconditioned laptops to feel confident and able to access education, toys and books in order to enjoy childhood and have fun. |
| Greater Reading Nepalese Community Association | 2000      | Weekly get together with entertainment activities including Cultural and Talent show to revitalise senior citizen of Gurkha veterans and other Nepalese community. The target group of people veterans Ex-Gurkha soldiers are not only elderly in age but also residing alone or only old couples in home. The elderly Gurkhas, spouses, and widows are one of the most vulnerable groups for their age, pre-existing health conditions, poor living conditions, and lack of English communication and proper understanding of the system.       |
| Green Health Thames Valley                     | 4114      | Extending provision to support more clients with mental health difficulties through a tailored programme of horticulture-based programmes & activities (horticultural therapy) based at their community garden in South Reading - one of Reading's most deprived communities. The project assists people to manage their condition, gain new transferable skills and self-confidence, support with community learning, moving clients closer to economic inclusion whilst reducing social exclusion.   |
| Me2 Club                                       | 5000      | To enable children and young people aged 5 to 19 years with wide ranging additional needs and disabilities to experience, and benefit from, weekly mainstream leisure activities of their choosing. The funding will support volunteer 'befrienders' who will be carefully matched to Reading children who require their dedicated emotional and practical support to access a mainstream leisure activity within their local community including: uniform groups, sports clubs, drama groups and social activities.                             |



| Organisation                      | Awarded £ | Purpose  |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|--|
| No5 Young People                  | 4114      | Joint bid with Reside Dance CIC<br>To address the increased counselling waiting list through The Moving Anniversary Stories dance and movement workshop programme. 20 clients at No5 Young People, who are not assessed as critical - and therefore likely to wait the longest will participate. Without any support, these young people would be disadvantaged further, their symptoms likely to worsen, and wellbeing deteriorate. This project is will explore their stories and experiences of No5 through dance and movement. Working towards a performance at No5 Young People's 50th anniversary gala at the Hilton Reading on 20th November 2021.  |
| Parents And Children Together     | 3000      | To expand Alana House Community Cafe pilot to run one extra day a week, training 5 new volunteers baristas from Alana House and supporting an extra 25 vulnerable women, many of whom are ex-offenders or are at risk of offending, in Reading. To give Alana House women the chance to learn new skills and to practise these in a friendly and non-judgemental space, helping to boost their confidence and enhance their employability prospects.   |
| Reading Community Learning Centre | 1470      | To provide free, women only Zumba classes with a free creche to provide access to physical exercise to ethnic minority women who would not have the means, knowledge or accessibility to any sports activities outside of their homes.<br>The project will help women become physically fitter and mentally healthier, it will also allow them to build a support network and lifelong friendships. To empower mothers, to teach their own children about the importance of physical and mental well-being. Many of these women are pinnacles in their own families, so in this way we hope to encourage healthy eating and healthy lifestyles in the families especially in light of increased diabetes and cardiovascular problems linked to these vulnerable BAME groups at the earliest stage possible.  |
| Reading Mencap                    | 5000      | To run a new weekly Saturday 'Transitions Club' for up to 15 young people aged 18-25 with learning disabilities, which will prepare them for adult life, develop their independence and connect them with peers. So that they can be active with their friends in the community, preferably at the weekend rather than an evening club, as many attend school or college during the week. The club will bring young adults together in a safe space, supported by staff and trained community volunteers. Professionals and club staff will give the young people training in life skills such as social skills, cooking, self-advocacy and making choices, staying safe (including online), dealing with emotions, healthy lifestyles, budgeting and shopping. We will also pay for social, physical and leisure activities chosen by the young adults to enable them to put these new skills into practice and bond as a group, e.g. bowling, drama, climbing, making music, sports. |

| Organisation                | Awarded £ | Purpose   |
|-----------------------------|-----------|---|
| Readipop                    | 5000      | Increased capacity for Readipop's free to access music youth club (AAA) at Readipop Studios in order to meet the increased demand experienced as a result of the pandemic. AAA Fridays are targeted towards vulnerable and disadvantaged children and young people who face barriers to accessing music-making as a direct result of who they are or where they live, and in particular those with social, emotional and mental health difficulties.  |
| Sadaka                      | 4114      | To continue and expand 'Step Up with Sadaka' for local people with a wide range of disadvantaged backgrounds. Some live on the streets or in temporary accommodation. To offer training and development prospects, and one to one mentoring, to increase self-confidence, impart new skills and ultimately pave the way to further education, volunteering and/or employment through one to one mentoring for each participant, to help work out aspirations and skill set and half and full day courses on a variety of personal development topics, basic ESOL and IT sessions, led by volunteer mentors, support to enrol into English, Maths and Digital skills course at New Directions College or vocational courses like sewing at local community centres, monthly book club. |
| Shift Youth + Community     | 5000      | A Youth Cafe Bus to serve the young people of Whitley / South Reading will provide a dedicated youth service for the area which has been missing for a few years. It will be staffed by trained youth workers and local volunteers. Sessions will include refreshments, games, sport, mentoring, time to chat and find out information about other services available. Will also involve teams from other services such as the local PCSO's, and the fire brigade.  |
| Smart Works Reading         | 1260      | To support a month's outreach programme for a free employment dressing and coaching service to help disadvantaged Reading women into work.  |
| Sport in Mind               | 5000      | To provide sport and physical activity sessions to improve the mental health and wellbeing of 20 young people aged 10-14. The sessions will be based in Whitley and Church wards. CAMHS will refer young people to attend a weekly physical activity and sport session (yoga, Tai Chi, Table Tennis, Badminton). As well as physical activity, these sessions will provide young people with strategies to release tension and stress and use them in their everyday life to manage their mental health.  |
| Starting Point (part of The | 10000     | Joint bid with Real-time Video (Action Media) who work with 11-25 year olds most in need and who may have multiple barriers such as learning disabilities/difficulties, no/low qualifications, social or digital isolation,   |

| Organisation                                   | Awarded<br>£ | Purpose   |
|--|--------------|---|
| Mustard Tree Foundation)                       |              | mental health or well-being struggles, and social-economic disadvantage. During the pandemic these young people have faced even further barriers and challenges. Young people who are NEET (not in employment, education, or training), at risk of exclusion or becoming NEET, or who may be at risk of exploitation, violence, crime and/or violence, are given the opportunity to work on real world creative media projects including video productions, website building, graphic design work, etc. alongside experienced media professionals and a mentor. The young people involved will have the opportunity to lead on the design, development, and delivery of a new project “Mind the Gap” within this established programme, where media production is utilised to tell their story of how they have been affected by Covid19. |
| Utulivu Women's Group                          | 5000         | To provide vulnerable women opportunities to connect and participate in weekly therapeutic conversations on different topics and music activities post lockdown. Topics will include: parenting, employability, self esteem, health and wellbeing, mental issues, suicide, remaining positive, self care, gardening among others.   |
| World Education Berkshire (RISC-Food4families) | 4928         | Continuation of the Food4Families project during autumn and winter 2021/22 to maintain engagement with project participants over the winter period, toward the 2022 growing season, which will be important to keep people motivated and involved, especially if the winter proves to be another difficult period for vulnerable and apprehensive people.   |
| Total  | 100,000      |   |

## Covid-19 - Start-up / re-start grants for community groups 2021/22 - Awards

| Organisation                | Awarded £ | Purpose  |
|-----------------------------|-----------|--|
| Age UK Berkshire            | 3000      | To restart 3 groups:<br>Tai chi sessions for older people encourage physical activity and aids balance as well as social interaction.<br>Badminton sessions for exercise and strength.<br>Singing group to aid controlled breathing, growing lung capacity and keeping the brain active.<br>Benefits for all include less loneliness, better fitness, less depression and residents being fitter and less reliance on NHS/LA services. It also acts a befriending service as attendees become friends and if someone doesn't arrive at class when expected, one of the volunteers or attendees will make contact to ensure the client is well. |
| Age UK Reading              | 4000      | To re-start their social activity programme at 4 venues: Cedar Court (In Whitley), Chimney Court (Serving Norcot), and Wierside Court (Orts Rd) and Southcote Community Centre to enable older people in Reading to regain community connections and, once again, be involved with safe, supported social activity in their local area.  |
| Al Majid Centre             | 1000      | To purchase books and tables to start children's Arabic classes  |
| Al Majid Centre             | 1000      | To purchase books and tables and sessional staff to start after school tutoring  |
| Al Majid Welfare Centre     | 1000      | To start a Women's group to increase knowledge, reduce isolation and depression by providing information   |
| Berkshire MS Therapy Centre | 1000      | To increase the number of sessions (physiotherapy/oxygen treatment/counselling) we can provide to 'jump start' a return to face to face services and address mental health needs due to anxiety of society returning to 'normal'. It will also allow us to purchase the equipment needed to continue online sessions as requested by our members.  |
| Christian Community Action  | 1000      | To reopen the Caversham Drop-In service that provides hot meals and refreshments, support, and signposting services to homeless and vulnerably housed people. This service was forced to stop when the pandemic broke out back in spring 2020.   |
| Club F.O.D                  | 1000      | To launch and promote: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tea-friending - A weekly or fortnightly visit</li> <li>• E-friending - A weekly or fortnightly phone call</li> </ul> For LGBT+ who are over 50 and are isolated and have limited social connections or who are housebound (no age restrictions) and have limited social connections<br>Normally Club F.O.D raises funds through Bucket Collections but these have been extremely reduced during  |

|  |      |  |
|--|------|--|
|  |      | restrictions.  |
| Coffee and Craft   | 2000 | To restart Senior Thursdays - A day of activities for the older residents of East Reading. Building on overall wellbeing and offering a hot meal.<br>Community Cafe - A safe space for local residents to get a cup of coffee, have a chat (if needed) and be referred to any other services they may need   |
| FAA (Fight Against AIDS) Society                                     | 1000 | To restart therapeutic in person writing workshops with Compass Recovery College, that aim to bring people in a safe space and environment to help them deal with a vast range of mental health and emotional wellbeing issues, addressing these through cathartic writing workshops. Supporting them in back to face to face hobbies, mental health and wellbeing support.  |
| Fifi's Vision  | 1000 | To re-start their fortnightly family dinner which during a cooked two course meal, which shows the parents easy, healthy affordable meals that they can do at home. At these meals they offer advice and provide networking opportunities so that the parents can have a wide range of peer support. Early years supervision is provided during the duration of the whole session.                                 |
| Fifi's Vision  | 1000 | To re-start in person 1-2-1 support service for parents of children with additional needs. The funding will be used to provide Covid-safe environment and pay for phone calls to families to save them the additional cost, when many of them are already struggling to afford the basics.   |
| Fifi's Vision  | 1000 | To provide a weekly group for parents and their children who have additional needs, offering early years support, a social time for both the parents and children and a chance to be with others going through similar situations. The group has a variety of supervised activities for the children run with early years practitioners and offers the parents advice while giving them the chance to take a rest. |
| Fifi's Vision  | 1000 | To re-start monthly support group which as well as running activities that offer support, help and advice, has guest speakers on special educational needs that can give direct support for the parents around their speciality and point them towards appropriate bodies that cater for their particular area of need.  |
| Grace Church Caversham   | 1000 | To set up a "Drop in Café" for those needing support with their emotional and mental well-being and building up friendships and links with others to combat isolation at these difficult times. The funding will used to redecorate the room and the materials needed, e.g. craft activities, refreshments, books etc, which would also help facilitate conversations for those attending.                         |
| Integrated Research and Development Centre (IRDC), Berkshire, UK CIC | 1000 | To restart coffee club events, creating a conducive environment for bringing out senior citizens' valuable experiences, the ups and downs during their life, coping strategies, adaptation in a new environment, cultural systems, foods adaption and exchange with neighbouring community groups. Similarly, sharing new knowledge and skills acquired by new generations with retired age groups.                |

|                                   |      |   |
|-----------------------------------|------|---|
| Jelly                             | 3000 | To restart the outreach delivery programme for 3 community sessions: Mother Tongue group for women with EAL, After School Art School, Outcasts knitting group.  |
| Parents And Children Together     | 408  | To start a new wellbeing group for vulnerable women living in and around Reading. The funds will be used to promote the group, buy cleaning materials and PPE, and to provide refreshments in a Covid-safe way.   |
| Reading Association for the Blind | 1000 | To promote the opening of group activities for people who are blind or with partial sight loss. Running more mini buses to get people to group meetings due to limited capacity on buses. Extra staff costs for cleaning and preparing equipment to be covid-safe.  |
| Reading Mencap                    | 2000 | To restart two Mencap Enables (ME) Day Activity Services. They will provide individual support for 50 Mencap Enables service users to return to the service post-lockdown and help them to adapt once they have returned, including supporting them to participate in physical exercise, educational and wellbeing sessions. The funding will be used for towards the salary of a qualified health professional who already works in the service, for an additional two days a week.  |
| Reading Refugee Support Group     | 1000 | To restart Sanctuary Strikers a football club made up of refugees and non-refugees. Before COVID, the club had roughly 40 players registered, and roughly half have a refugee background. The club aims to promote friendship and integration in the community through the international language of football. The club ceased its activities during Covid. The funds will be used to finance the initial costs of first full season after lockdown. Running costs include player registrations, hiring of pitches and training facilities, officials' fees, insurance and the purchase of club equipment (balls, nets, training aids) and of course playing shirts and other kit.  |
| Reading Refugee Support Group     | 2000 | To restart:<br>1. Drop in centre that has been closed for personal contact during the lockdowns but has continued to operate remotely during that period. The face to face meetings will restart and take place twice weekly. They are open to all for social gatherings, mentoring etc. The funding will be used to provide PPE equipment, fixed and disposable, room hire costs, refreshments and travel costs of all attendees.<br>2. Homework Club. Pre COVID, they operated a homework club providing a facility for children to work together on homework projects. The funding will be used to promote the availability of the clubs and re-establish the links and contact with schools and pupils. Also, to provide necessary PPE and restock supplies of educational materials. |
| Readipop                          | 1000 | To offer a hybrid weekly face-to-face session but also film or live-stream for Moving On, weekly choir for retirees and elderly people as some of participants will not be able to access in-person sessions as they have been self-isolating throughout the pandemic due to the fact that they are Clinically Extremely Vulnerable. This funding will help cover the costs of an additional member of staff being present during the sessions to manage the filming and distribution of the online aspect and any equipment that may be needed. The funding  |

|                                |      |  |
|--------------------------------|------|--|
|                                |      | will also go towards keeping the sessions free/at a reduced rate for as long as possible to continue to reach those who are economically disadvantaged.  |
| Readipop                       | 1000 | To re-start Tea and Jam sessions face-to-face in September. Tea and Jam is a ukulele group for retired and elderly people who (pre-pandemic) met weekly to play and sing together and continued on-line during the pandemic. Many participants want to re-start face-to-face sessions but there are others who will not be able to participate in person as they have been self-isolating throughout the pandemic due to the fact that they are Clinically Extremely Vulnerable. To keep everybody engaged and able to participate they will offer both the option of online and face-to-face sessions to participants. The funding will help cover the costs of an additional member of staff being present during the sessions to manage the filming and distribution of the online aspect and any equipment that may be needed. The funding will also go towards keeping the sessions free/at a reduced rate for as long as possible to continue to reach those who are economically disadvantaged. |
| Readipop                       | 840  | To restarting Beatroots a community samba drumming group. Approximately one third of participants are aged 60 - 80+ and include a variety of conditions and circumstances that make them clinically extremely vulnerable including; multiple sclerosis, cancer recovery, bi-polar disorder, autism, downs syndrome, obesity, diabetes, family members shielding and other visible and hidden disabilities. Weekly sessions stopped in March 2020. It is/was not technically possible to run drumming session online. The funding will be used to cover venue hire costs to help with group restart in-person sessions in September 2021 in a larger, covid-safe environment and to offer free taster sessions and low-cost beginners workshop sessions to encourage new members to join. Once the group becomes re-established it will be self-financing and sustainable.  |
| Redlands Parish Church         | 1000 | To restart monthly coffee mornings for the local community, which have been happening for many years at their local hall. They have been a good way to connect people who are lonely.  |
| Sadaka                         | 1000 | To resume weekly inside service by making the necessary Covid-safe adjustments to enable provision of hot meals, ambient food, a social opportunity to meet others, second-hand clothes, books, other basic necessities like toiletries, bedding, sleeping bags etc. to those struggling financially, sleeping rough and/or are homeless. Mentoring, training and development opportunities as well as a monthly book club.  |
| Support U                      | 1000 | To restart face to face sessions which our service users, enabling Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender people of all ages to meet up safely in an environment not centred around alcohol (such as gay bars). So they can relax and get the support they need in an accessible way.  |
| Thames Valley Positive Support | 1000 | To restart weekly drop-in sessions in Reading for our service users. Drop-in sessions typically last 2 hours and provides a safe place for people to socialise, as well as being able to receive both one to one and peer support. The funds will be used to secure a suitable venue large enough that social distancing can always remain in place throughout the drop in, to give more clients the confidence to attend and that can act as a safe space for service users to meet. The funding will also ensure provision of some form of pre-prepared food at the venue to make it a more welcoming environment and ensure cleaning supplies and PPE necessary   |

|   |        |  |
|---|--------|--|
|   |        | to provide a safe and hygienic environment.  |
| The Globe Community Mission Project Luncheon Club for the Elderly | 1000   | To gradually ease attendees of the Club out of Lockdown and Shielding, by having them attend at least 3 monthly outdoor Outings/Picnics, in Gardens and Parks in Reading and its environs. Each Group will consist of not more than 20 individuals of varying abilities. It will be the first face to face gathering for the Group, as since 1st April 2020, attendees of the Club, have been communicating with each other by means of a 24/7 WhatsApp Forum.   |
| The Jamaica Society and Friends Reading (Reading)                 | 1000   | To restart face to face/virtual activities for the elderly members from the Black Caribbean community (especially those of Jamaican heritage) and their friends. Supporting venue hire for monthly meetings, postage, printing, newsletter, stationery, publicity for our events and digital inclusive training for members so that they can access information, presentations, courses, training and activities online.   |
| Weller Centre   | 1000   | To support the re-starting of the parents and toddler groups run by the centre, by purchasing equipment to make the activities as covid compliant as possible, toys, materials for messy play to ensure that the activities are varied from week to week to offer the children different stimulus and to cover administration cost.  |
| West Reading Together   | 1000   | To restart their Board Game Social Group for elderly people. To pay for a venue, instead of using the small public space in Battle library, which due to size would not be able to socially distance or manage safety for elderly members and members of the public would not be able to use the library safely. Individually packaged refreshments and disposable cups for hot drinks; purchasing two to three new games that enable social distancing and minimal contact with parts of the game. Promoting that they are open again (printing posters and leaflets). Small amount of PPE (masks, gloves for those that don't have them), hand sanitizer and cleaning materials. |
| Whitley Community Development Association                         | 1000   | To reopen their community cafe, which they use as a social engagement tool. During the pandemic they have supported vulnerable members of the community and identified groups to run including sewing, a men's shed and a women's group.   |
| Whitley Wood Community Centre                                     | 1000   | To restart the Coffee / Craft / Chat group. To open their larger hall to enable tables to be spaced out so people can be more distanced. This will enable provision of more crafts to encourage more people to come. To bring occasional demonstrators to the group to teach new skills such as cooking on a budget, bread baking, also upcycling and make do and mend. For craft materials, tools and kitchen equipment.  |
| Total   | 44,248 |  |



## Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

---

Name of proposal/activity/policy to be assessed: **Award of Reading Borough Council Small Grants Fund and Covid-19 - Start-up / re-start grants for community groups 2021/22**

Directorate: Resources

Service: Corporate Improvement and Customer Services

Name: Clare Muir

Job Title: Policy and Voluntary Sector Manager

Date of assessment: 29/09/21

---

### Version History

| Version | Reason  | Author     | Date     | Approved By |
|---------|---------|------------|----------|-------------|
| 1       | Initial | Clare Muir | 29/09/21 |             |
|         |         |            |          |             |
|         |         |            |          |             |

# Scope your proposal

## 1. What is the aim of your policy or new service/what changes are you proposing?

We have pledged in our [Corporate Plan](#), that we will focus on the needs of the most vulnerable, ensuring young people, older people, those with long term health conditions or disabilities and those most affected by Covid-19 get the help they need to live successful, independent lives in vibrant, thriving communities.

The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) 2019 shows that there are [5 areas of Reading that are in the 10% most deprived areas of the country](#). These are in Whitley, Church, Southcote and Norcot wards.

We also know that nationally, ethnic minority populations, especially Black, Pakistani and Bangladeshi residents, are more likely to live in areas of deprivation. In Reading the areas with the highest populations of Black, Pakistani and Bangladeshi residents are in Battle, Katesgrove, Park and Minster wards, which do not show up as the highest deprivation areas in the IMD so there is possible hidden poverty in these areas.

The aim of the **Small Grants Fund** was for community-led activities that support thriving communities: addressing the impact of poverty and supporting mental well-being in Reading's most deprived neighbourhoods and communities.

The aim of **Covid-19 - Start-up / re-start grants** was to enable community group meetings or activities that facilitated people, including people who may have been identified as Clinically Extremely Vulnerable, to regain community connections where they may have already undergone lengthy periods of self-isolation, or who may be required to self-isolate in future and may be at risk of loneliness and social isolation.

## 2. Who will benefit from this proposal and how?

### **Small Grants Fund**

The intended beneficiaries were stated as being:

young people, older people, those with long term health conditions or disabilities and those most affected by Covid-19 get the help they need to live successful, independent lives in vibrant, thriving communities.

those living in the 5 areas of Reading that are in the 10% most deprived areas of the country - located in Whitley, Church, Southcote and Norcot wards.

Black, Pakistani and Bangladeshi residents who are more likely to live in areas of deprivation. In Reading the areas with the highest populations of Black, Pakistani and Bangladeshi residents are in Battle, Katesgrove, Park and Minster

wards, which do not show up as the highest deprivation areas in the IMD so there is possible hidden poverty in these areas.

**Covid-19 - Start-up / re-start grants**

Clinically Extremely Vulnerable people would benefit from being able to be with others in an organised and structured environment that adheres to ongoing social distancing requirements and reduce the risk of COVID transmission.

**3. What outcomes does the change aim to achieve and for whom?**

**Small Grants Fund**

Benefits for people beyond the life of the individual project funded, in terms of skills gained; increased knowledge, confidence, self-esteem, independence; relationships built, self-help groups established etc.

**Covid-19 - Start-up / re-start grants**

Clinically Extremely Vulnerable people regain community connections where they may have already undergone lengthy periods of self-isolation, or who may be required to self-isolate in future and may be at risk of loneliness and social isolation.

## Assess the Impact of the Proposal

Both funds were advertised and administered concurrently. The funding opportunity was advertised through a comprehensive network and a press release:

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Reading Voluntary Action                                    | wide voluntary sector (distribution list and newsletter)                        |
| Reading Neighbourhood Network                               | neighbourhood groups in Reading (e-newsletter)                                  |
| Alliance for Cohesion and Racial Equality                   | groups representing equality and cohesion interests                             |
| Reading Advice Network and Advice Forum                     | advice services   |
| Family Information Service (including the SEND Local Offer) | children and young people voluntary and community organisations, including SEND |
| Cultural Development  | culture and arts groups   |
| Community Development                                       | neighbourhood groups and community buildings on RBC Housing estates             |

|                                    |   |
|------------------------------------|---|
| Adult Social Care                  | disability, older people, carers groups, Narrowing the Gap providers  |
| Policy                             | Community Buildings Transition Scheme recipients, RBC Grants fund recipients  |
| Public Health & Wellbeing messages | Campaigns, services, activities and all communications relating to health and wellbeing. Black and Minority ethnic and religious groups |

Applications were through an online form with guidance for applicants. Applicants could request alternative methods of making their application. The funding window was open from 14<sup>th</sup> June to 25<sup>th</sup> July 2021.

Small Fund grants were awarded to 22 organisations. The award criteria required the proposal to address poverty or mental wellbeing. Table 1 shows that most of the awarded proposals addressed both, with 16 addressing poverty and 17 addressing mental wellbeing.

Table 1

| Target Themes addressed in application | Number of applications |
|--|------------------------|
| <i>Poverty</i>                         | 16                     |
| <i>Mental well being</i>               | 17                     |

The awarded proposals also addressed one or more of the target groups identified through previous needs analysis as priorities for action, as shown in Table 2

Table 2

| Target Groups                                      | Number of applications |
|--|------------------------|
| <i>Young people</i>                                | 13                     |
| <i>Older people</i>                                | 2                      |
| <i>Long term health conditions or disabilities</i> | 5                      |
| <i>Those most affected by Covid-19</i>             | 9                      |
| <i>Whitley, Church, Southcote and Norcot wards</i> | 13                     |
| <i>Hidden poverty</i>                              | 9                      |

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <p><b>Describe how this proposal could impact on racial groups</b></p> <p>The funding guidance set out that one of the priorities for the funding, based on previous needs analysis was possible hidden poverty in areas with the highest populations of Black, Pakistani and Bangladeshi residents. 9 (41%) of the awarded proposals addressed this priority.</p>   | <p><b>Is there a negative impact? No</b></p> |
| <p><b>Describe how this proposal could impact on Sex and Gender identity (include pregnancy and maternity, marriage, gender re-assignment)</b></p> <p>Neither Sex nor Gender identity were specific priorities for this funding programme but the projects addressing poverty generally would benefit these groups; and projects addressing young people’s mental wellbeing could be expected to impact positively on parents’ wellbeing.</p>  | <p><b>Is there a negative impact? No</b></p> |
| <p><b>Describe how this proposal could impact on Disability</b></p> <p>Five (23%) of the awarded proposals specifically addressed the needs of people with long term health conditions or disabilities.</p> <p>The Covid-19 - Start-up / re-start grants were specifically aimed at people who may have already undergone lengthy periods of self-isolation, or who may be required to self-isolate in future and may be at risk of loneliness and social isolation, including people who may have been identified as Clinically Extremely Vulnerable.</p> | <p><b>Is there a negative impact? No</b></p> |
| <p><b>Describe how this proposal could impact on Sexual orientation (cover civil partnership)</b></p> <p>Sexual orientation was not a specific priority for this funding programme but the projects addressing poverty generally would benefit this group.</p>   | <p><b>Is there a negative impact? No</b></p> |

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <p><b>Describe how this proposal could impact on age</b></p> <p>Two of the priorities for the funding, based on previous needs analysis were young people and older people. 13 (59%) of the awarded proposals specifically addressed the needs of young people and 2 (9%) specifically addressed the needs of older people.</p> <p>The Covid-19 - Start-up / re-start grants were specifically aimed at people who may have already undergone lengthy periods of self-isolation, or who may be required to self-isolate in future and may be at risk of loneliness and social isolation, including people who may have been identified as Clinically Extremely Vulnerable.</p> | <p><b>Is there a negative impact? No</b></p> |
| <p><b>Describe how this proposal could impact on Religious belief</b></p> <p>Religious belief was not a specific priority for this funding programme but the priority to address possible hidden poverty in areas with the highest populations of Black, Pakistani and Bangladeshi residents would be expected to have a positive impact for people of diverse faiths.</p>   | <p><b>Is there a negative impact? No</b></p> |

## Make a Decision

### No negative impact identified

#### 1. How will you monitor for adverse impact in the future?

The criteria for the Small Grants fund are developed based on analysis of need and priorities. We are in ongoing dialogue with the voluntary and community sector who work closely with and represent equality groups and will seek feedback from the sector. an outcomes

Each Small Grant awarded project is required to provide an interim and final monitoring report.

Clare Muir

X

Completing Officer

Isabel Edgar

X

Lead Officer

## Reading Borough Council Small Grants Fund 2021/22

Reading Borough Council has allocated £100k for small grants to the voluntary and community sector for the year 2021/22.

The Council is inviting applications for funding for community-led activities that support thriving communities: addressing the impact of poverty and supporting mental well-being in Reading's most deprived neighbourhoods and communities.

The funding is available to support the infrastructure and/or additional capacity needed by voluntary and community organisations to expand existing services, deliver services in a different way or to develop new activities

Applications should be made using (Business Case for Small Grants Fund 2021/22)

[www.reading.gov.uk/SmallGrantsFund](http://www.reading.gov.uk/SmallGrantsFund)

The deadline for applications is the 25th July 2021. Applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application by 6th August 2021.

If you have any queries please contact Clare Muir, Policy and Voluntary Sector Manager email:

[clare.muir@reading.gov.uk](mailto:clare.muir@reading.gov.uk) / tel: 0118 9372119

### Background information

We have pledged in our [Corporate Plan](#), that we will focus on the needs of the most vulnerable, ensuring young people, older people, those with long term health conditions or disabilities and those most affected by Covid-19 get the help they need to live successful, independent lives in vibrant, thriving communities.

The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) 2019 shows that there are [5 areas of Reading that are in the 10% most deprived areas of the country](#). These are located in Whitley, Church, Southcote and Norcot wards.

We also know that nationally, ethnic minority populations, especially Black, Pakistani and Bangladeshi residents, are more likely to live in areas of deprivation. In Reading the areas with the highest populations of Black, Pakistani and Bangladeshi residents are in Battle, Katesgrove, Park and Minster wards, which do not show up as the highest deprivation areas in the IMD so there is possible hidden poverty in these areas.

### Scope of the Grants Programme

#### What you can apply for

1. Grants of up to £5,000 – increased to £10,000 for joint bids proposing a co-ordinated approach by more than one organisation to support the infrastructure and/or additional capacity needed by organisations to expand existing service, deliver services in a different way or to develop new services.



## **Who can apply**

2. The grants programme is aimed at Community groups based in the Reading borough:
  - charitable organisations
  - voluntary organisations
  - community groups
  - faith groups
  - sports groups
  - arts groups
  - cultural organisations
  - uniformed groups (scouts, guides etc)
  - not-for-profit social enterprises

## **What will be funded**

3. You know your communities best. We want this grants programme to support activities that are right for your community but they should be activities that benefit people beyond the life of the project, in terms of skills gained; increased knowledge, confidence, self-esteem, independence; relationships built, self-help groups established etc. This could be through:
  - Play, sport/ physical activities, music, dance, drama activities
  - Social activities
  - Food growing, cooking
  - Learning or training activities
  - Mentoring/coaching
  - Activities that bring different age groups or cultures together
4. The activities/initiatives should be focused on areas of greatest need. (see Background Information)
5. Grants will be awarded for purposes such as:
  - Local 'one off' and small projects
  - Running an event
  - Minor start-up costs (get new idea/project 'off the ground')
  - Purchasing equipment
  - Sessional costs
6. Funding will only be given to a project or activity that addresses an unmet need of Reading residents and is not funded or able to be funded through other sources. Applicants will be expected to disclose their other funding sources.

## **What we are looking for**

7. We are keen to enable communities to help themselves and to support projects or activities that contribute to sustainable outcomes.
8. We are interested bids to put new ideas into practice or to respond to emerging needs within the community.

9. We are particularly interested in bids that propose use of community buildings in the area where activity will be taking place. To explore opportunities for using community buildings for your project please contact Jo Anderson (email: [Joanne.Anderson@reading.gov.uk](mailto:Joanne.Anderson@reading.gov.uk) / tel: 0118 937 4258

**What applications should include**

10. Applications will be required to:

- Show evidence of need (data, research, community feedback, examples)
- Describe what the grant will be used for and how many people are expected to benefit
- State how it will make a difference/how this will address the need
- Provide a realistic delivery plan

**Funding conditions**

11. The funding will be required to be spent within the financial year of the award.
12. Monitoring - Successful applicants will be expected to provide an Interim report on their project after 6 months and a Full report at the end of the project (12months).

## **Covid-19 - Start-up / re-start grants for community groups 2021/22**

Reading Borough Council is inviting applications for funding from community groups, to enable them to start up/restart community group meetings and activities.

**The Council has allocated £50k of its CEV (Clinically Extremely Vulnerable) funding from the Government for Start-up / re-start grants for community groups – up to £1,000 per group (organisations may apply for more than one grant if they propose to run more than one group)**

### **Purpose of this funding**

Many community groups which were operating pre COVID have largely or wholly suspended face-to-face activity for a year. Other groups have sprung up to help people meet the challenges of the pandemic but have only ever operated virtually. This funding is available to help meet the challenge of starting or re-starting face-to-face meetings as we open up.

The funding is aimed at community group meetings or activities that facilitate people to regain community connections where they may have already undergone lengthy periods of self-isolation, or who may be required to self-isolate in future and may be at risk of loneliness and social isolation. This includes people who may have been identified as Clinically Extremely Vulnerable.

It is offered to enable organisations to provide assurance to people that they can meet with others in an organised and structured environment that adhere to ongoing social distancing requirements and reduce the risk of COVID transmission.

### **What the funding can used for**

The funding can be used to help meet the costs of starting up or restarting your community group meetings and activities such as:

- Promotion costs - telephone calls or printing and postage.
- Cleaning materials for hygiene control
- PPE
- Covering door fees to allow for attendee numbers to build up again.
- Additional costs of food preparation/provision within COVID-19 safety guidelines, e.g. buying in pre-prepared meals.

### **Who can apply?**

Start-up / re-start grants are aimed at Community groups based in the Reading borough

Applications should be made using *online form*.

The deadline for applications is the 25th July 2021. Applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application by 6<sup>th</sup> August 2021.

If you have any queries please contact Clare Muir, Policy and Voluntary Sector Manager email: [clare.muir@reading.gov.uk](mailto:clare.muir@reading.gov.uk) / tel: 0118 9372119