

BRADFORD ON AVON AREA BOARD

WILTSHIRE COUNCIL
20 SEPTEMBER 2009

Agenda Item 10

Report from the Bradford on Avon Community Area Grants Advisory Group

The Bradford on Avon Community Area Grants Advisory Group is composed of Parish Councillors from across the Bradford on Avon Community Area. The Group is tasked with examining applications requesting community area grant funding to ensure best value for money. The comments from the group are presented to the Wiltshire Council Councillors on the area board as additional information to help them when they are deciding whether to award funding. The decision on whether to award funding is taken at a public area board meeting by Wiltshire Councillors.

The Grants Advisory Group met on the 1st September 2010. Present at the meeting were Councillor Bil Bailey (Limpley Stoke Parish Council), Cllr Terry Biles (Westwood Parish Council), Cllr Matthew Midlane (Monkton Farleigh Parish Council) and Cllr Alan Mines (Wingfield Parish Council).

The group raised the following questions about the application from the Bradford on Avon Rowing club. The responses from Bradford on Avon Rowing Club are shown below each question.

1) It was noted that the Rowing Club have £49,000 in reserves. Could provide some more information about why additional funding was required despite these reserves?

Response: In the 1960s the boathouse burnt down, the club nearly went bankrupt due to a lack of reserves and so ever since then we have tried very hard to have a "fire fund" so to speak so that if the roof suddenly needed replacing or other major maintenance then we are able to do this. This money is ring fenced.

2) Has the Rowing Club thought to apply to Sports England or another body governing Rowing Sports for funding?

Response: We have applied to Sport England for funding within the last year and have been rejected. We put in an application to Wiltshire Youth Opportunity Fund (WYPOF), which scored highly, but then missed out as with the change in government WYPOF's funding was pulled.

3) Was there a specific reason why the Rowing Club haven't consulted the Town Council?

Response: Due to the pressing nature of our requirement for better equipment for our juniors we felt that it was necessary to put the application in for the September meeting rather than missing the boat.

4) How does the Rowing Club usually manage to purchase new boats?

Response: The club usually manage to purchase new boats by buying very cheap second hand boats where we can, selling old boats and by using monies raised from our membership. In these difficult economic times we are unable to turn to our membership as many of them are having trouble paying their subscription fees, never mind donating extra monies.

5) Could you provide more information about how the club intends to ensure local young people benefit through links with the local youth services and St Laurence School?

Response: Our junior members are based locally, attend local schools and so this project will directly benefit local youth. Even with this grant we will still face a limit as to the number of young people that we are able to manage whilst maintaining quality provision. We would therefore be willing to engage with local youth services and to talk to local schools about how we can work together, but it should be borne in mind that unlike some other sports e.g. football, it will not be possible for us to cope with very large groups of young people without a severe diminution of the quality of the sporting experience.

Additional comment from the grant advisory group

The group are concerned about the size of the Rowing Club's reserves and that there is no suggestion that they are willing to contribute from these reserves towards the cost of this youth boat. One might consider this club has considerable financial capacity to fund its operations and that they might be expected to contribute at least half the intended expenditure from present - or future - funds raised.

If the £49K is intended to cover fire etc surely such an event would be covered by insurance. Before any further action is taken the 'Rowing Club' should be asked to confirm that they have adequate insurance cover and if they do, they should be asked to justify in detail why they need to hold £49K as a reserve/contingency fund.