
Ernest Stevens Trusts Management Committee – April 2015

Report of the Chief Officer for Finance & Legal Services
Stevens Park and Recreation Ground Foundation Trust

Purpose of Report

1. To consider the request for a grant from Stevens Park and Recreation Ground Foundation Trust.

Background

2. Ernest Stevens made various donations of property which were to be used for specified purposes. These have been identified as individual Trusts and detailed below:
 - i. Mary Stevens Maternity Home and Public Park Charity.
 - ii. Mary Stevens Park, Recreation Ground and Park, Norton.
 - iii. Stevens Park, Quarry Bank.
 - iv. Stevens Park and Recreation Ground Foundation, Wollescote
3. Only the Stevens Park and Recreation Ground Foundation has investments, which generate income for disbursement.
4. Previously the management of the above trusts was delegated to the Stourbridge Area Committee. Members will be aware that following the consultation on Area Committees and the introduction of Community Forums, the four Ernest Stevens Trusts are now combined under the control of this Committee as Trustees.
5. In the application of the income of the Foundation, the Trustees have discretion to give preference to the area of the former Urban District of Lye and Wollescote and to meeting the needs of the people resident therein.
6. There is no set maximum amount stipulated in the Trust deed for a grant. However, in the past, the Trustees have tended to apply the criteria that the grant should be a maximum of £5000 or 50% of the total cost of a capital project.

Application

Crystal Bowls Club

7. The applicant is a Level Green Bowls club aiming to foster and safeguard the quality of the Level Green game of bowls for the community irrespective of age, sex, religion, disability, sexual or financial standing .

8. The club covers the area of the former Urban District of Lye and Wollescote, and the wider area of Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council, as well as having members from further afield
9. The club wishes to erect two 14' x 8' sheds as additional changing facilities; one for ladies and one for men. A full planning application will be lodged shortly. An informal opinion from the planning office suggests a temporary (3 year) permission could be granted. (pre-application ref PRE15/00183)
10. They have raised £308 so far with a Horse Race evening. They also are considering a request for funds from the Community Forum but have not yet applied
11. The total cost of this project is estimated at £4300 and the applicant has requested a grant up to this amount. The cost includes the cheaper of 2 quotes for the structures plus foundations, planning fees, timber, paint, locks and other peripherals. It also includes a contingency of £117.
12. It should be noted that the park staff would prefer to prepare the foundations themselves but have yet to provide a quote
13. The applicant has submitted their constitution and a history of the club and detailed reasons regarding the benefits of gaining better changing facilities
14. Accounts for the two years to 30th September 2013 and 2014 which show cash at bank and petty cash amounting to £11,103 at the end of that period

Finance

15. During the last financial year no grants have been awarded. This is the first meeting of the new financial year and this is the only grant request received so far.
16. The income of the trust in 2014/15 is approximately £16,000 and it is expected that this will not significantly change in 2015/16.
17. At a previous meeting of the former Finance (Stevens' Bequests), Sub-Committee, Members agreed to maintain the "real" spending power of the bequest as a fundamental part of the investment strategy. The total sum shown in Paragraph 14 above could be spent without jeopardising the strategy. However, should the value of the investment fall, any income then generated would need to be reinvested and would not be available for disbursement.

Law

18. The Council is successor to the former Stourbridge Council by virtue of the Local Government Act 1972.
19. Section 139 of the Local Government Act, 1972 empowers the Council to accept, hold and administer gifts of property, where it enables them to discharge any of their functions, and where the gifts are for the purposes of benefiting the inhabitants of their area.
20. The conditions, under which a gift is to be administered, are contained in the Deed

creating the Trust, and any subsequent schemes made by the Charity Commission.

21. The law relating to Trusts, which are charitable, is contained in various acts, the main ones being the Charities Act, 1960, the Charities Act 1992 and 1993, and the Trustee Investment Act, 1961.

Equality Impact

22. The Trusts have been set up to benefit the public in certain geographical areas of the Borough as outlined in the Deeds of Gift.

Recommendation

23. It is recommended that the Committee consider the request for a grant as detailed in the report.



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List of Background Papers

Application form and quote; Accounts for year to 30th September 2014 - *Emailed to Members prior to the meeting but contain exempt information under terms of part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.*