

Report to County Councillor Kim Snape
Report Submitted by: Head of Democratic Services

Local Member Grants Scheme Application from:
Astley Gems Morris Dancers

	Corporate Priorities: Better lives for all;
Electoral Division(s): Chorley Central; Chorley North; Chorley Rural East; Euxton, Buckshaw & Astley; Chorley South;	
Contact: Local Member Grants, Democratic Services, Tel: (01772) 530078, LPTLocalMemberGrants@lancashire.gov.uk	

Summary

Purpose of the Report

This report presents an application from a local organisation requesting £2000 towards dancer's uniforms from the Local Member Grants Scheme.

The organisation has submitted a multi-division application requesting a total amount of £2000 from the Local Member Grants Scheme towards the same project. Requests have been made to each of the following county councillors and a separate report will be submitted to each councillor for their determination:

- County Councillor Steven Holgate - £500
- County Councillor Hasina Khan - £500
- County Councillor Julia Berry - £500
- County Councillor Kim Snape - £250
- County Councillor Aidy Riggott - £250

Recommendation

County Councillor Kim Snape is asked to consider the request for grant funding as set out in the report.

It should be noted that the outstanding amount being requested by organisations for grant applications comes to a combined total of £1260. The total amount of funding available in County Councillor Kim Snape's budget is £1010.

Therefore, the maximum amount of funds that can be approved for outstanding grant requests is £1010.

Background

1. On 16 December 2021, Full Council approved the reintroduction of the Local Member Grants Scheme. Under the scheme, each county councillor has been given a specific budget which they can spend to enhance the economic, social, and environmental well-being of people who live in their division. Following the reintroduction, using powers in the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, the Leader of the County Council has authorised individual county councillors to take formal decisions on behalf of the county council.
2. For the financial year 2024/25, each county councillor has a budget of £2000. Each councillor can also carry forward a maximum of £200 that was unspent in the previous financial year. County Councillor Kim Snape's total budget is set out in the financial section of the report.
3. Details of the requests for grant funding are shown below:

Full name of your organisation	
Astley Gems Morris Dancers	
How much are you applying for? Minimum £100, Maximum £2000	
£2000	
Which county councillors' electoral division(s) will your expenditure cover or benefit?	
Name	Amount
Chorley Central – Cllr Steven Holgate	£500
Chorley North – Cllr Hasina Khan	£500
Chorley South – Cllr Julia Berry	£500
Chorley Rural East – Cllr Kim Snape	£250
Euxton, Buckshaw & Astley – Cllr Aidy Riggott	£250
What are you going to spend the grant on?	
<p>We are a new not-for-profit Dance Troupe based in the heart of Chorley. We set up in September 2024. The funding we receive would be spent on the dancer's uniforms. Dresses for Morris dancers are very costly and can cost in excess of £1500-£2000. In addition to the dresses, the troupe need shakers to dance in competitions, with 2 per person costing £15-20 per pair. We need socks, underwear, dress bags, pump bags, pumps, and shorts, t-shirts and hats for our male members.</p> <p>Second hand dresses would cost around £600, these would need alterations to fit the girls and could total up to costing close on £1000. We have 28 members already on our books. New dresses are costly but are guaranteed to last 2-3 Years. Second hand dresses are already at the very least 3 years old when purchased at this price, and visible signs of wear and tear is always apparent. In the long run, second hand dresses could cost more as they become unsuitable after 3 to 4 years.</p>	



Date of your project / event or the purchase of goods

We started the troupe in September 2024 and our aim is to compete in competitions for the 2025 season, starting in March. As soon as we receive funding for the children and young adults, we will purchase the items required to compete.

How will the money benefit people in the councillor(s) division(s)?

The troupe has been put together by myself and another volunteer. Our troupe mainly consists of members from the local and surrounding areas. We keep our activity at a very low cost and are continually conscious to keep expense at an affordable level for families on a low income. Many have more than one child that want to join so we try our best to cater for these families and are continuously aware that no one will be at a disadvantage.

We are an inclusive, diverse team and welcome children from all cultural and social backgrounds, and we endeavour to encourage and protect their mental and physical wellbeing. We do not want anyone to feel at a disadvantage.

Our new members have excelled in confidence, compassion, commitment and other areas since joining us. Our troupe also brings together all the parents, and extended family, friends and unites them in support of their children. Our project is encouraging unity within our area. We believe that readily available access to training and development encourages the chances of improving life skills at an early age and we feel that the children get older and mature, these skills which we will embed into their lives will continue to grow.

We are aware that in our area there is a high number of low achievers. There is a significant lack of structure in many families, and we feel that this may be causing difficulties in the children's and parents emotional, psychological, mental and behavioural wellbeing. Some members of our team have been excluded from school leaving them without structure in their lives. We felt the need to address this as soon as possible and have concluded that many of them have developed low esteem, confidence issues, no feelings of self-worth or ambition. We have experienced vulnerable members, so our aim is to target these children/ young people as soon as possible.

Our members are a wide range of ages, from aged 2 and upwards. Our aim is to raise our members and their families' spirits and wellbeing and give them a sense of belonging. It is our aim to provide them with an activity and service that they can enjoy and be a part of. It is our intention to embed confidence and compassion. We will teach them how to dance which will in turn, will encourage team building skills, concentration, hand-eye co-ordination, listening skills, being able to follow instruction and social interacting skill instead of constant social media interaction. Hopefully, this nurturing will help them to develop as they progress through school and extend into their working lives.

Morris dancing is total teamwork for every person dancing in the troupe and we strive to entrench this very significant skill into all our members. So far, in such a short space of time, this activity has proved to have an enormous impact on our families' lives. It has made a pleasing difference to the children who were getting into trouble through



boredom. These children and their families have taken part of being involved in a team very seriously and dancing has become a major priority in their lives. The majority have now developed an awareness of their own actions and the influences they will have on the others.

Chorley is quite a small town compared to many others and has many disadvantaged areas, and we feel our residents all deserve the right to a safe haven. Whether it be in activities or in their homes. A group of us local people recognised this and joined together to help to form the troupe. All members of our own families, neighbours and friends have supported our cause. We have designed leaflets on our computers, delivering them through doors in our residential areas and to shops, etc.

The trainers who coach the children and run the cause are local volunteers including mothers and grandmothers who were once dancers themselves. A social media page has been set up by us, one public, advertising the cause and one which is private and for members only. This is to provide the troupe and their families with information on where to meet and times for practices, where we will meet for competitions and general information of where we will be competing. We have made everything family friendly and are a very interactive troupe for all the community to be involved in if they so wish.

We have been fundraising consistently since we began, to buy - socks, knickers, shorts, t-shirts, head dresses, pumps, bells, and ribbons.

The more expensive things we need are the reason for this application.

The room to train in costs £45 per week for 2 hours, a family member has funded this since we started, as we only charge £3.00 per week subscription, and are struggling to fund the room and save funds to buy essentials for the troupe.

Please give a detailed breakdown of your expenditure for your activity / equipment.

We will need for the new season:

New dresses. Each dress can cost from £75-100 per person, and we have 28, so far on our books to provide the uniform for. The material, zips, cuffs etc are the most expensive then the dressmaker charges £35.00 per dress.

Shakers for the dancers are £15 per pair to be made in the same colour as the dresses. We will need around 20 Pairs.

These are the most important things and the most expensive.

Dresses would cost £2100-£2800
Shakers in excess of £300

We will happily raise funds in addition to any grant we receive.



If you are not asking for the full amount of the cost of your activity / equipment, please give us details of where the rest of the funding is coming from. Please also explain what you will do if we give you the grant, but you do not get the other funding.

We will continue to fundraise. It will take longer to do anything with the troupe without any support. We (the troupe) receive no sponsorship or grants from anywhere in the Chorley area. This troupe is for the people in our community, and I consider it important to our families to try our very best to keep going.

We intend to have a stall in local Spring/Easter/Summer/ Christmas fairs at schools and local churches involving the children and families donating prizes and gifts etc.

We also intend in Season 2026, to hold a competition in Chorley, inviting other troupes to compete. This is a huge fundraising event. First, we need to have enough in our funds to be able to pay for a large room to hold the competition.

If the councillor offers a grant of less than you have asked for, please explain below how that will affect your proposal – for example, will you still be able to complete your project or purchase, will you scale the project back, or seek funding elsewhere?

We would try to seek funding elsewhere. We cannot take the girls out to competitions without the correct uniform. To prevent them from going out to competitions because we have no essentials for them, would result in boredom setting in, and the girls would leave and the whole project would collapse.

We will try to continually fund raise because we need also to have funds to get the troupe to competitions. We may need to hire a coach or minibus, and due to some of our families struggling and there being more than one of their family in the troupe, it will be expensive for them to pay for everything, so the funds would help subsidise the cost, to keep it to the absolute minimum. We cannot scale this project back. The more members we get, the more people in the community come together with their families and represent our town of Chorley.

Will the activity involve members of your organisation having significant contact with children or vulnerable adults?

- Yes
 No

Options and Proposals

4. There are three options available:
5. **Option One:** Approve the application in full for the amount requested.
6. **Option Two:** Approve the application in part for a reduced amount.
7. **Option Three:** Reject the application.



Consultations

8. This report has been written in consultation with Astley Gems Morris Dancers and using the information provided in their application.

Context and Implications

Legal (including Human Rights)

9. In submitting their application, the organisation has signed the Local Member Grants Scheme Funding Agreement which sets out the terms and conditions of the grant. Those conditions include a requirement that any funding awarded to them will be used solely for the purposes set out in their application and this report.

Financial

10. The outstanding amount being requested by organisations for grant applications comes to a combined total of £1260. The total amount of funding available in County Councillor Kim Snape's budget is £1010.

11. Therefore, the maximum amount of funds that can be approved for outstanding grant requests is £1010.

12. An updated summary of spend in 2024/25 is shown below:

Budget for 2024/25		£2,000.00
C/F from 2023/24		£35.00
Refunds		£0.00
Total Grant Available in 2024/25		£2,035.00
Grant Allocations Already Approved	Sea Cadets Chorley	£225.00
	TAAG Achievements	£300.00
	Chorley Women's Centre	£100.00
	St Joseph's Bowling Club Anderton	£400.00
		£1,025.00
Grant Remaining to be Allocated in 2024/25		£1,010.00
Grants Requests Submitted but not yet Approved or Rejected	White Coppice Cricket Club	£1,010.00
		£1,010.00
NEW REQUESTS	Astley Gems Morris Dancers	£250.00
		£250.00
Total Grant Requests in Progress		£1,260.00
Value of Grant Remaining to be allocated in 2024/25 if all outstanding requests are approved		-£250.00



Equality and Diversity

13. The Local Member Grants Scheme enables each county councillor to enhance the economic, social, and environmental wellbeing of people who live in their division. Applications for grant funding may relate to projects or activities that seek to benefit specific groups with protected characteristics.

Risk Management

14. No significant risks have been identified.

15. Following the receipt of grant funding, organisations are contacted for evidence to demonstrate that the money awarded has been spent in accordance with their application. The outcome of this monitoring activity is reported to the council's Audit, Risk and Governance Committee.

List of Background Papers

Paper	Date	Contact/Tel
None		

Part II Reason

16. N/A

