

**Report to County Councillor John Fillis**  
**Report Submitted by: Head of Democratic Services**

**Local Member Grants Scheme Application from:**  
About the Town CIC

	<b>Corporate</b>	<b>Priorities:</b>	Stronger
	communities;		
<b>Electoral Division(s):</b> Skelmersdale East; Skelmersdale West;			
<b>Contact:</b> Local Member Grants, Democratic Services, Tel: (01772) 530078, <a href="mailto:LPTLocalMemberGrants@lancashire.gov.uk">LPTLocalMemberGrants@lancashire.gov.uk</a>			

## Summary

### Purpose of the Report

This report presents an application from a local organisation requesting £1,000 towards refreshments and craft supplies from the Local Member Grants Scheme.

The organisation has submitted a multi-division application requesting a total amount of £1,000 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 Julie Gibson - £700
- County Councillor John Fillis - £300

### Recommendation

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

## 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 John Fillis' 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	
About the Town CIC	
How much are you applying for? Minimum £100, Maximum £2000	
£1,000	
Which county councillors' electoral division(s) will your expenditure cover or benefit?	
Name	Amount
Skelmersdale West (Cllr Gibson)	£700
Skelmersdale East (Cllr Fillis)	£300
What are you going to spend the grant on?	
<p>The grant will be used to help fund the ongoing delivery of our weekly <i>Community Cuppa</i> sessions for six months. These sessions provide a vital safe space where individuals of all backgrounds can connect, enjoy free refreshments, and participate in therapeutic arts and crafts activities designed to support positive mental well-being. The funding will specifically cover the costs for refreshments and craft supplies.</p> <p>The <i>Community Cuppa</i> sessions provide a vital lifeline for individuals struggling with loneliness, anxiety, discrimination and social isolation. Many attendees face significant barriers to social interaction, whether due to financial hardship, disability, or mental health conditions such as depression. For some, this is their only opportunity to leave the house each week, helping to break cycles of isolation and offering a safe, welcoming space where they feel valued and supported.</p> <p>By fostering <b>meaningful social connections</b>, the sessions help reduce feelings of loneliness, which is proven to have a direct impact on mental well-being. Engaging in <b>therapeutic creative activities</b>, such as arts and crafts, provides a sense of purpose, lowers stress, and boosts self-esteem. The availability of free food and drinks alleviates financial pressure, ensuring that everyone—regardless of circumstances—can participate without worry.</p> <p>Beyond this, <i>Community Cuppa</i> acts as an <b>informal support network</b> where attendees can share their experiences, talk through challenges, and access signposting to other essential services. The positive, judgment-free environment encourages open conversation, helping individuals build confidence, resilience, and a</p>	



greater sense of belonging within their community. This initiative is not just about providing refreshments—it's about rebuilding lives, improving mental health, and creating a stronger, more connected community.

**Date of your project / event or the purchase of goods**

The sessions are already currently taking place, and while we are committed to sustaining these sessions long-term, the rising costs of running a community hub and the increasing financial pressures of running a small business mean that we must seek external funding to continue providing free services to those who need them most. If we are awarded the funding, we will start spending it from the week we receive the funding and will deliver 25 individual sessions within a 6-month period from that date.

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

The *Community Cuppa* provides essential social, mental, and emotional support to those who need it most. Many attendees face social isolation, financial hardship, disabilities, or mental health challenges. Some can only afford one bus trip per week, using it to attend our sessions, where they can access free food, drinks, and social interaction in a warm, supportive environment.

The sessions directly improve well-being, reduce loneliness, and create a sense of belonging, which is crucial in a town where accessible, free community services are in high demand.

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

**Refreshments (toast, butter, hot/cold drinks, biscuits, fruit)** – To ensure every attendee receives free food and drinks at each session.

**Crafting Materials** – Supplies for therapeutic activities such as flower arranging, card-making, and other creative workshops.

**Admin** - Covers essential promotion to ensure the *Community Cuppa* sessions are well-attended and accessible to those who need them. This includes:

- **Social Media Promotion** – Time spent creating and scheduling posts to engage the community and inform potential attendees.
- **Printed Magazine Promotion** – Advertising the sessions in *About the Town Magazine* for wider visibility (promotion in 2 editions)
- **Posters & Flyers** – Designing, printing, and displaying materials to raise awareness locally

Refreshments (average 35 people per session) at £0.94 per head x 25 sessions = £822.50

Crafting Supplies at £5 per sessions x25 sessions = £125.00

Admin = £50 one-off fee.

Total requested £997.50



**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 are requesting the full cost of this activity.

**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?**

If we receive less than the requested amount, we may need to:

- Reduce the **number of sessions** delivered
- **Limit refreshments** or crafting materials provided
- **Rely on additional fundraising** efforts to cover costs

However, we are **committed** to ensuring the continuation of *Community Cuppa* and will seek alternative funding sources to bridge any shortfall.

**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 About the Town CIC 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. An updated summary of spend in 2024/25 is shown below:

Budget for 2024/25		£2,000.00
C/F from 2023/24		£0.00
Refunds		£0.00
<b>Total Grant Available in 2024/25</b>		<b>£2,000.00</b>
Grant Allocations Already Approved	First Upholland Scout Group	£500.00
	Crawford Village Scout Group	£500.00
	Skem Menaces Disabled Football Club	£500.00
	The Sewing Rooms	£200.00
		£1,700.00
<b>Grant Remaining to be Allocated in 2024/25</b>		<b>£300.00</b>
Grants Requests Submitted but not yet Approved or Rejected	Ormskirk Street Pastors	£250.00
	West Lancs Debt Advice	£250.00
	Learning Stars	£500.00
		£1,000.00
NEW REQUESTS	About the Town CIC	£300.00
		£300.00
<b>Total Grant Requests in Progress</b>		<b>£1,300.00</b>
<b>Value of Grant Remaining to be allocated in 2024/25 if all outstanding requests are approved</b>		<b>-£1,000.00</b>

## Equality and Diversity

11. 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

12. No significant risks have been identified.

13. 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

14. N/A

