



Brixham Town Council

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Town Clerk: Mrs Tracy Hallett

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Contact Officer	Tracy Hallett	Job Title	Town Clerk
Report Title	Brixham Stronger Together		

Summary

In February 2020, Brixham Town Council formed a collaborative group of organisations called Brixham Stronger Together to support the Brixham community and encourage all of Brixham organisations to work together. It came into its own during lockdown and the group consisting of established organisations and charities working together to offer a better support service to the community during the pandemic.

Brixham Stronger Together identified a need for additional support for people of all ages who were suffering with poor mental health and identified a gap in provision around out of hours services based in Brixham.

Brixham Town Council was successful in receiving £13,000 from Torbay Council as part of their Government funding to tackle COVID related matters. This funding focused on supporting those people who approach out of hours services, or those people who will not engage with traditional mental health pathways, for example;

- the depression and anxiety service due to waiting lists;
- an unwillingness to engage with statutory services;
- where there is a concern that a person's mental health may deteriorate drastically and there are barriers to accessing services;
- The person is in need of support out of hours; or
- where a need for early intervention is identified

Brixham Stronger Together also secured additional funding of £1,000 from Western Power Distribution and £100 from Virgin Media to support 200 Christmas hampers being delivered in December 2020 and food and activity packs given to families during the summer holidays.

This fund is now running low and YES Brixham, who administer the scheme, have approached Brixham Town Council to seek further funding to enable them to continue to offer this service.

Recommendation

That Brixham Town Council grant YES Brixham £5,000 to support the Mental Health Scheme until the end of the financial year. The money to come from the Community Recovery budget and YES Brixham should be advised that they should not be reliant on the Town Council giving them future grants.

Supporting Information

Proposal given to Brixham Town Council in September 2019:

Describe the projects/activities you plan to use this grant for to support vulnerable people in the Town affected by the Coronavirus Health Emergency

Our proposal is that funding be secured to facilitate a group of counsellors to be available on a paid basis, for nominated groups who have given an expression of interest, to refer people who may not be able to engage with traditional mental health pathways, for example;

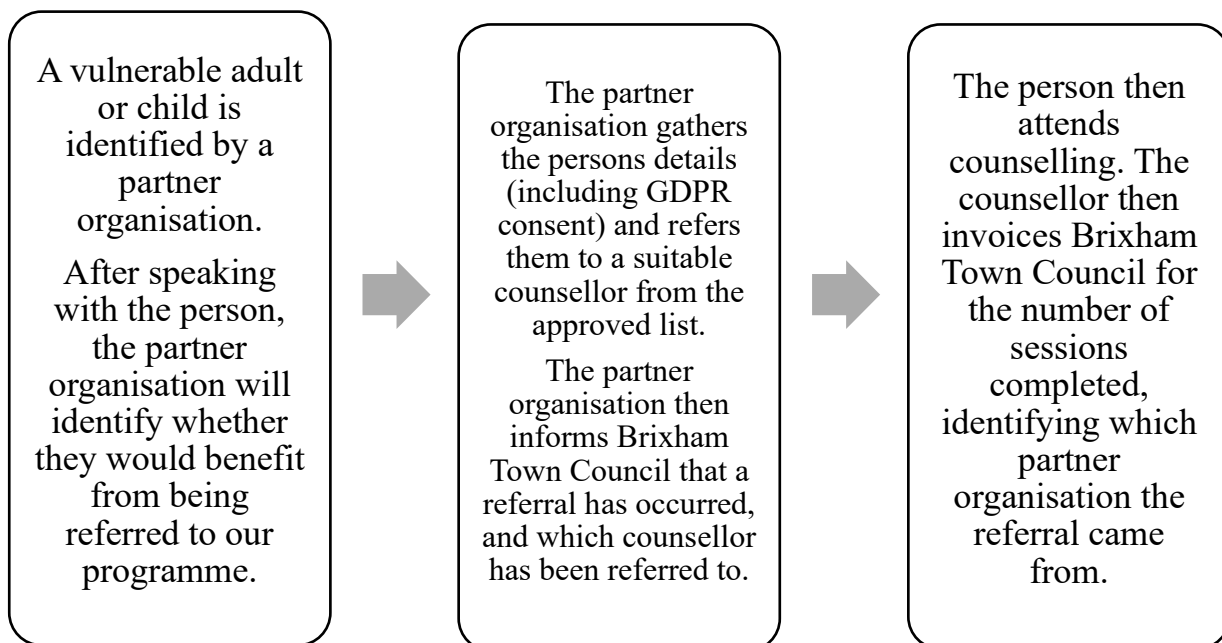
- the depression and anxiety service due to waiting lists, or,
- an unwillingness to engage with statutory services,
- where there is a concern that a person's mental health may deteriorate drastically and there are barriers to accessing services,
- The person is in need of support out of hours
- or where a need for early intervention is identified.

Organisations in Brixham have identified that there is a need for additional support for people of all ages who are suffering with poor mental health. Organisations have identified that there is a gap in provision around out of hours services based in Brixham and this scheme will be predominantly focused on supporting those people who approach out of hours services, or those people who will not engage with traditional mental health pathways.

The nature of the scheme should be test and learn so that it can be adjusted to better meet the needs of the community. An example would be that if demand is shown, we will divert funds to make a counsellor available on retainer out of hours.

Training should also be available for the staff and volunteers of groups to include mental health first aid. We will seek free training in the first instance.

Outcomes of the scheme will be that there is a more comprehensive service for those experiencing poor mental health. There will also be an increase in peer support across organisations, as groups will meet monthly to discuss the progress of the scheme and any redesign that may be needed. The scheme is designed so that where necessary confidential conversations can be had across organisations for them to deliver appropriate services.



What criteria will you use to measure the success of the project and how many vulnerable people from the Town do you expect to benefit for the project/activity?

That people who have needed mental health support have been able to access this from the organisations involved in this project, that the organisations involved have been able to signpost and refer people to counselling that would not have engaged in statutory services, identified as needing early intervention. That the organisations involved feel there is more support out of hours regarding mental health and if needed there is access to a counsellor.

That organisations have the skills required to support people with mental health as they need them and have a pathway to signpost.

The number of people from the town who will benefit from this project is an unknown quantity, as the pandemic continues more people of all ages are presenting with issues and of course working with one person will have an impact on more than just that one person, including their families, as well as their ability to contribute positively to the community.

Referrals

Referrals are made by the local doctor surgery, social prescribers connected to the doctors surgery and Department of Work and Pensions. YES Brixham receive the referrals, check they meet the scheme criteria and refer them to a local Counsellor. As Brixham Stronger Together is a collaboration, they do not have a bank account and therefore Brixham Town Council retained the monies, paying Counsellors on receipt of invoices.

In the initial days, the scheme was not well used. However, once the scheme was known to the above mentioned groups, the referrals started to increase.

From the outset, the progression of the scheme was discussed at Brixham Stronger Together meetings where a Council Officer and Town Councillor were also present. However, with a changeover in personnel at YES Brixham, it seems that this no longer happens. It should also be noted that there are no Town Council representatives at the meetings due to staff shortages and a changeover in Councillors.

Since the scheme began, the following referrals have been received:

Company	Number of referrals
The Edge	7
Brixham Does Care	8
Torbay Carers Service	1
Compass House Surgery	29
Corner Place Surgery	1
Mayfield Medical Practice	1
Brixham Job Centre	1

There are currently two Counsellors that receive referrals, one of which has done since the scheme began. She has advised that she has seen a total of 57 clients with a total of 222 appointments to date. Clients only receive a maximum of six counselling sessions.

Although, there have been the odd one or two that have needed more and the Counsellor contacts Brixham Town Council seeking approval.

Financial Information

Date	Company	Expenditure	Income	Balance
07.07.20	Torbay Council		£13,000.00	£13,000.00
12.08.20	Virgin Media		£100.00	£13,100.00
18.11.20	Ria Dart	£160.00		£12,940.00
15.12.20	Ria Dart	£120.00		£12,820.00
29.01.21	Ria Dart	£120.00		£12,700.00
14.02.21	Western Power Distribution (WPD)		£1,000.00	£13,700.00
01.04.21	Ria Dart	£600.00		£13,100.00
13.04.21	Ria Dart	£880.00		£12,220.00
21.05.21	Kathryn Mann	£120.00		£12,100.00
21.05.21	Ria Dart	£1,330.00		£10,770.00
21.06.21	Kathryn Mann	£120.00		£10,650.00
21.06.21	Ria Dart	£930.00		£9,720.00
22.07.21	Kathryn Mann	£40.00		£9,680.00
22.07.21	Kathryn Mann	£80.00		£9,600.00
22.07.21	Ria Dart	£610.00		£8,990.00
23.08.21	Ria Dart	£1,010.00		£7,980.00
23.08.21	Kathryn Mann	£280.00		£7,700.00
23.08.21	Brixham YES (Re WPD Grant)	£1,000.00		£6,700.00
24.09.21	Kathryn Mann	£120.00		£6,580.00
24.09.21	Ria Dart	£850.00		£5,730.00
27.10.21	Ria Dart	£610.00		£5,120.00
27.10.21	Kathryn Mann	£240.00		£4,880.00
18.11.21	Ria Dart	£1,130.00		£3,750.00
18.11.21	Kathryn Mann	£280.00		£3,470.00
	Ria Dart	£1,210.00		£2,260.00

Additional Funding

YES Brixham have advised that they have sourced an additional £2,000 which will help in the interim, but would not support the scheme for the longer term.

Matters to Consider

As mentioned above, at the outset of this scheme, there were two representatives of the Town Council on the collaboration group. Due to staff shortages and a changeover in Councillors, the Council has not had a representative at the meetings for a few months. In addition, there has been a changeover of staff at YES Brixham.

With these changes, it has resulted in (a) Brixham Town Council not fully understanding the need for the scheme and (b) no reporting has been given at the Brixham Stronger Together meetings.

Whilst it is appreciated that the scheme is of a delicate nature, there are concerns that it is not widely known that Brixham Town Council are financially supporting it.

Anticipated Annual Expenditure

The expenditure from April to November is £9,960, based on the same level of expenditure for the remainder of the financial year, the projected expenditure will be in the region of £14,940.

Impact on Mental Health from COVID

Mind.org.uk carried out a survey and produced a report in July 2021. The report states that:

1. People who were more likely to struggle with their mental health before the pandemic have experienced the greatest impact. They report an increase in the severity of challenges they're facing now and concerns about the future. They urgently need tailored support.
2. Nearly half of those who took part in our survey thought their mental health would improve once restrictions eased. However, people are most worried about the transition to seeing and being near others.
3. We knew there was a connection between poverty and mental health before the pandemic. Coronavirus has heightened these inequalities. Our research shows people receiving benefits have been hit particularly hard and are experiencing increasingly severe and complex problems. This shows support is needed beyond mental health services.
4. Young people who struggle with their mental health were more likely to be using negative coping strategies, like self-harm, than adults. Isolation and loneliness have made people's mental health worse – with young people particularly badly affected.
5. There is an urgent need for investment in high quality trauma-informed support. Everyone should be given choice in how they access and receive support. Much more work needs to be done to ensure support is available for young people, racialised communities, and those in poverty.

Community Recovery Budget

The Town Council approved a budget of £51,020 for community recovery and included the following projects as outlined in the Community Recovery Plan:

Project	Money Allocated	Project update
Gutter Clearing	£1,800	Not proceeding
Loans / Grants to businesses	£5,000	Not proceeding
Renew Markets	£500	Not discussed to date
Shop Local Scheme	£2,500	Torbay Council launched a scheme. BTC not proceeding at this stage
Improve information about the offer in the town	£2,500	Not proceeding
Floral displays	£1,500	Completed. Spent £2,520.47
Power washing public areas	£1,000	Ongoing with Lengthsman Scheme
Support those looking to start traders associations	£1,000	Not proceeding and removed from recovery plan
Improvements to town from central car park	£1,000	Not discussed to date, but involves working with Torbay Council
Lobby Torbay to lift car parking and toilet charges	£1,000	Not proceeding and removed from recovery plan
Solar Powered bins	£1,000	SWISCo committed to purchasing sensors
Landscape improvements and general tidying up	£1,000	Ongoing with Lengthsman Scheme
Community Transport	£10,000	Torbay Council currently working on project to continue to support community transport
Pedestrian & café outdoor seating space	£1,000	Not discussed to date, but involves working with Torbay Council
Cycle improvements	£3,000	Awaiting approval of site locations from Torbay Council
Illuminations to promote night time economy	£1,000	Proposal submitted to Torbay Council for approval. Funded by Torbay Council.
Town Square back in use	£1,000	Part of wider Town Centre Regeneration discussions
Brixham Stronger Together	£12,220	Balance £2,260
New BTC website	£2,500	Quotes received for C&E to consider in January.

As you will see from the table below, there are sufficient funds available to consider supporting the Mental Health Scheme until the end of the Financial year.

Project	Money Allocated	Project update
2021/22 Budget	£51,020.00	
Brixham Stronger Together	£9,960.00	Transferred from Ear Marked Reserves
K6 Telephone Boxes	£190.28	Transferred from Ear Marked Reserves
Revised 2021/22 Budget	£61,170.28	
Expenditure		
Floral Displays	£2,520.47	
Brixham Stronger Together	£9,960.00	
K6 Telephone Boxes	£190.28	
Open Day Event	£355.89	Grant received for this and shown in Projects (Income)
Community Grant: Youth Genesis	£7,357.70	
Defibrillator replacement Pads	£103.00	
Time and Tide Bell Rent	£25.00	Recharged to Time and Tide Bell group and shown in Projects (Income)
Regalia Engraving and Repair	£50.83	
2 x Remembrance Wreaths	£40.00	
	£20,603.17	
Projected Expenditure		
Renew Markets	£500	
Improvements to town from central car park	£1,000	Not discussed to date, but involves working with Torbay Council
Pedestrian & café outdoor seating space	£1,000	Not discussed to date, but involves working with Torbay Council
Cycle improvements	£3,000	Awaiting approval of site locations from Torbay Council
Brixham Stronger Together	£2,260	Balance £2,260
New BTC website	£2,500	Quotes received for C&E to consider in January.
	£10,260	

Budget Balance		
Revised 2021/22 Budget	£61,170.28	
Less Expenditure	£20,603.17	
Less Projected Expenditure	£10,260.00	
Revised 2021/22 Budget Balance	£30,307.10	

