

**REPORT TO A MEETING OF THE CULTURAL AND COMMUNITY COMMITTEE TO BE HELD ON 28<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 2022**

**ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE TOWN COUNCIL COMMUNITY GRANTS FUND 2021/22**

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To provide a detailed breakdown and overview of grant funding expenditure in the financial year 2021/22.

2. OVERALL COMMUNITY GRANTS EXPENDITURE

Total Allocated Budget 2021/22 = **£50,000** (Total Allocated Budget 2020/21 = £55,000)  
 Total Expenditure 2021/22 = **£44,495.06** (Total Expenditure 2020/21 = £48,133.94)  
 Total Unspent = **£5,504.94** (Total Unspent = £6,866.06)

No. of Applications 2021/22 = **26** (No. of Applications 2020/21 = 41)  
 No. of Successful Applications = **25** (No. of Successful Applications = 32)  
 No. of Unsuccessful Applications = **1** (No. of Unsuccessful Applications = 9)

*Figures from 2020/21 in brackets for comparison*

3. BREAKDOWN OF GRANTS EXPENDITURE

The table below shows how much grant funding was distributed according to the categories which match the application criteria:

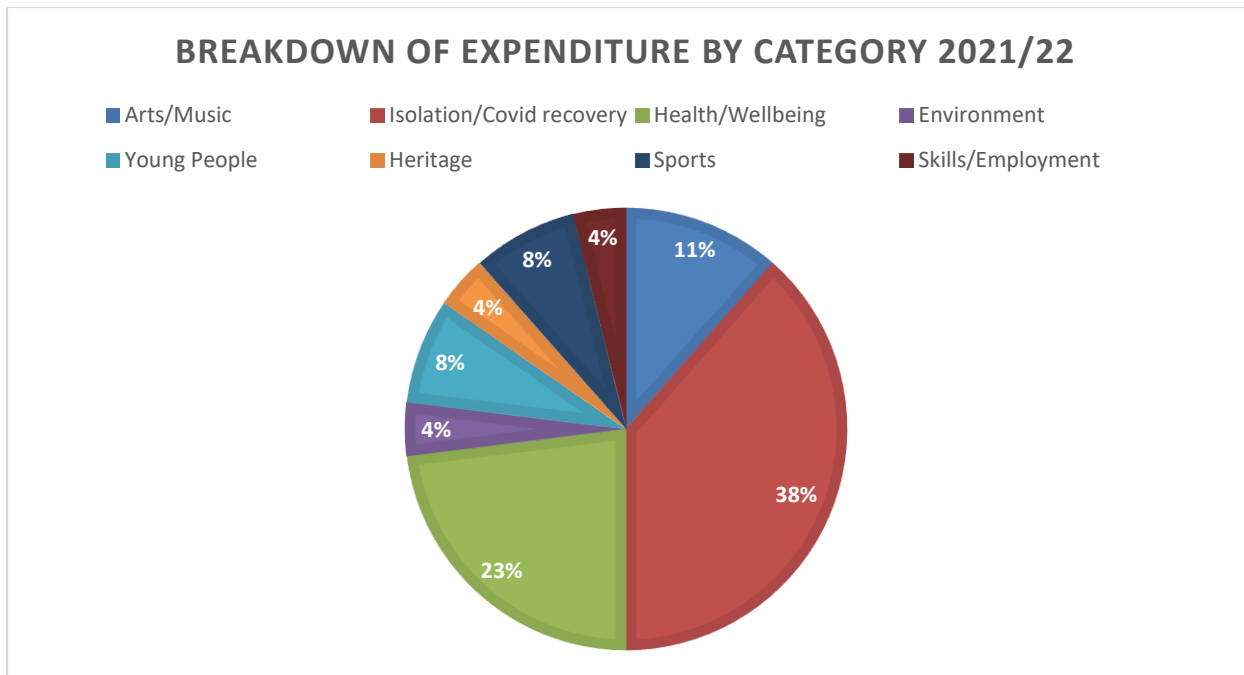
**2021/22**

<u>Arts/ Music</u>	<u>Isolation/ Covid 19 support</u>	<u>Health/ Wellbeing</u>	<u>Environment</u>	<u>Young People</u>	<u>Heritage</u>	<u>Sports</u>	<u>Skills/ Employment</u>
£5,975	£14,680	£11,608	£1,936.80	£2,995.26	£2,000	£3,300	£2,000

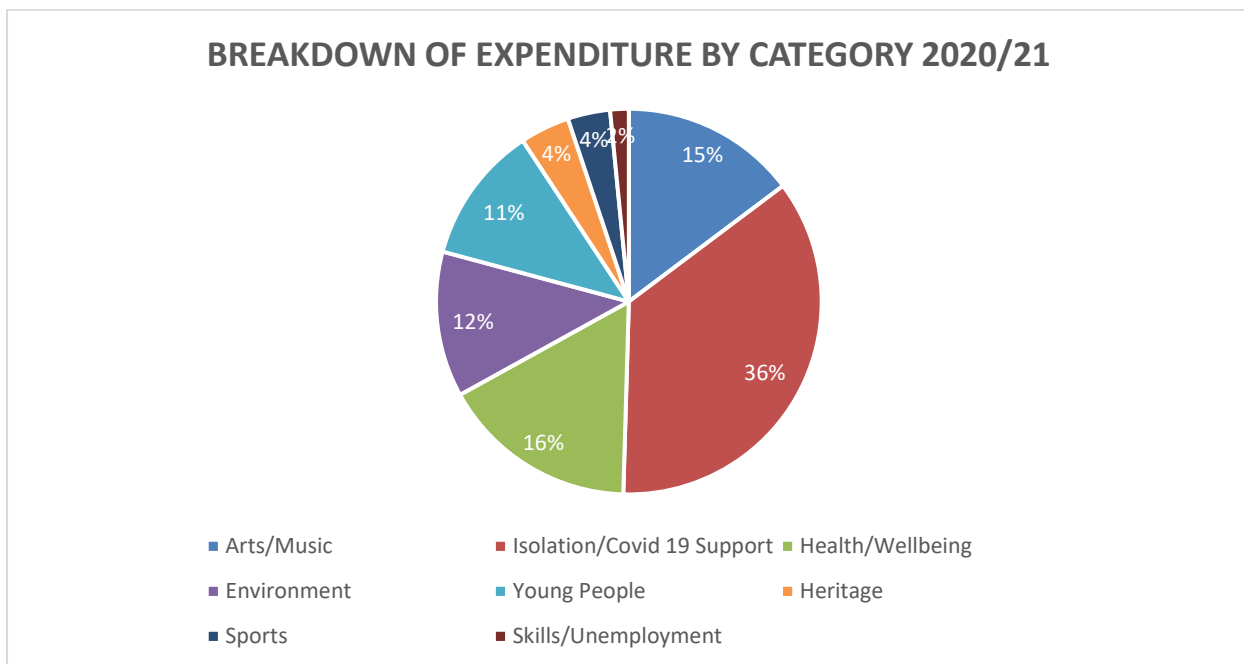
*Figures below from 2020/21 for comparison*

**2020/21**

<u>Arts/ Music</u>	<u>Isolation/ Covid 19 support</u>	<u>Health/ Wellbeing</u>	<u>Environment</u>	<u>Young People</u>	<u>Heritage</u>	<u>Sports</u>	<u>Skills/ Employment</u>
£7,100	£17,188.81	£7,948	£5,875	£5,558.13	£2,000	£1,714	£750



*Figures below from 2020/21 for comparison*



It can be seen that in 2021/22 the largest amount of funding again aided projects aimed at reducing social isolation and supporting Covid-19 recovery in Leamington Spa whilst this year the smallest amount went to projects to support the environment. It must be noted that some projects cross categories – an effort has been made to put the projects into single specific categories depending on how strongly the project was shown to support a particular criteria in the funding application.

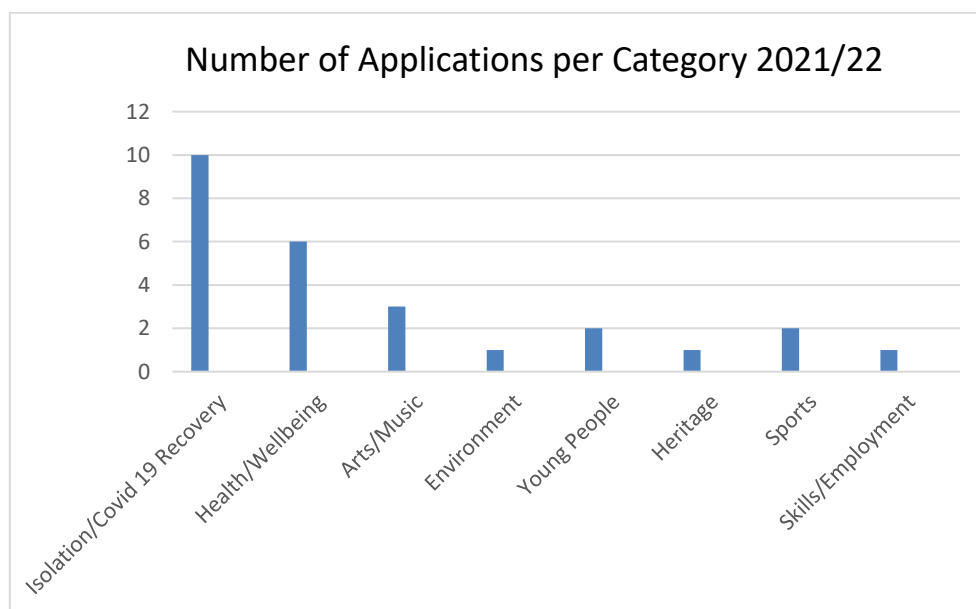
**2021/22**

<u>Funding Round</u>	<u>Arts/ Music</u>	<u>Isolation/ Covid 19 support</u>	<u>Health/ Wellbeing</u>	<u>Environment</u>	<u>Young People</u>	<u>Heritage</u>	<u>Sports</u>	<u>Skills/ Employment</u>
May 2021	0	4	1	0	1	0	1	1
Sept 2021	0	2	4	0	0	1	0	0
Jan 2022	3	4	1	1	1	0	1	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>

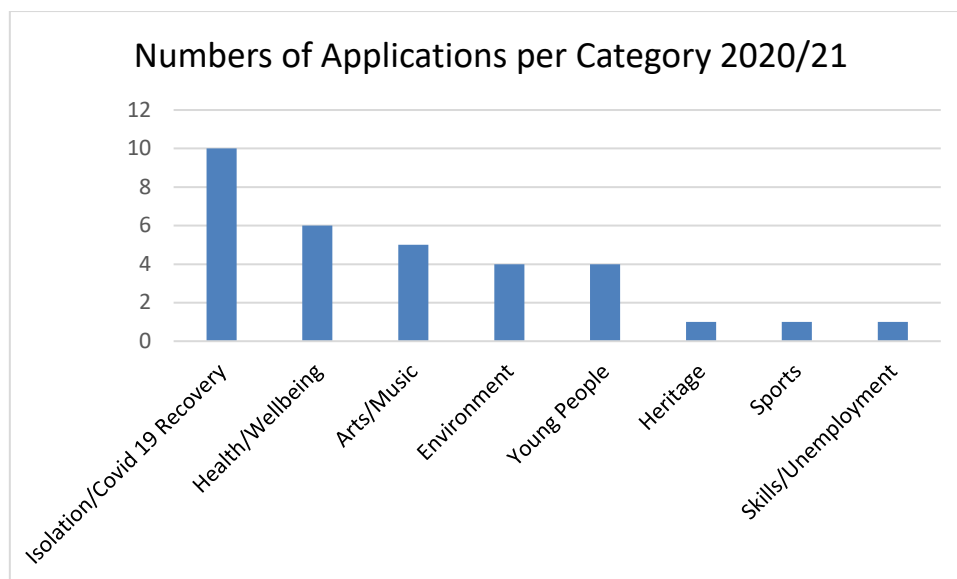
*Figures below from 2020/21 for comparison*

**2020/21**

<u>Funding Round</u>	<u>Arts/ Music</u>	<u>Isolation/ Covid 19 support</u>	<u>Health/ Wellbeing</u>	<u>Environment</u>	<u>Young People</u>	<u>Heritage</u>	<u>Sports</u>	<u>Skills/ Employment</u>
May 2020	1	2	2	1	1	0	1	0
Sept 2020	1	6	3	3	1	1	0	0
Jan 2021	3	2	1	0	2	0	0	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>



*Figures below from 2020/21 for comparison*



In 2021/22, the highest number of applications for projects which aimed to reduce isolation and support Covid-19 recovery were spread more evenly across each of the three grants rounds. Community groups and support organisations were functioning more normally after March 2021 and had become more adept at adapting their projects for virtual delivery or had integrated social distancing successfully into their projects. The number of projects intended to support Health/Wellbeing remained stable and were the second most popular type of project. These projects included both well-established support from organisations such as Myton Hospice and Warwickshire & Northamptonshire Air Ambulance and new offerings to boost mental health such as the RLS Canoe Club sessions for autistic children and vulnerable women, and the SWFT Charity's provision of a Quiet Room for patients and relatives at Leamington Spa Hospital.

The number of projects supporting the environment, young people and arts/music all dropped as planning and delivering arts workshops and music events has again been difficult in 2021/22, although this is beginning to improve as Covid 19 restrictions are gradually being phased out now. Similarly, young-person targeted projects have been very challenging to deliver on schedule as groups have struggled to secure venues and, if successful, have struggled to attract good numbers of attendees as Covid 19 restrictions have changed throughout the year (for example the NW Active Community Foundation CIC only secured a venue for its Active Recovery Programme for young people in September 2021 despite receiving their grant in September 2020).

Groups have put on hold new green improvement or sports projects for the same reasons – they cannot secure enough participants, cannot do them virtually and/or have put a hold on projects until all restrictions are lifted.

Heritage projects remain static – the Town Council receives very few of these except from the Leamington History Group, the Leamington Society or the Lillington History Group. Projects to support skills/employment growth also remain static despite

posters and emails advertising the Community Fund being sent to all the relevant organisations flagged up in the Annual Grants Review last year (Leamington Chamber of Trade, Young People First, LAMP, Lillington Youth Centre, Brunswick Hub, SYDNI Centre, secondary schools and the College (outreach)).

#### 4. LOCATIONS OF APPLICANTS 2021/22

- Applications from groups located within Leamington Spa = **18**
- Applications from groups located outside Leamington Spa = **8**

*Figures below from 2020/21 for comparison*

- *Applications from groups located within Leamington Spa = 23*
- *Applications from groups located outside Leamington Spa = 18*

All projects took place within Leamington Spa or nearby ie Warwick. If projects occurred outside the town boundary then they included and benefitted Leamington Spa residents. All applicants are asked to provide numbers of Leamington Spa residents they intend to include or are asked to confirm that they will restrict any funding they may receive from the Town Council to the Leamington Spa area.

#### 5. UNSUCCESSFUL APPLICATIONS

There was one funding application which was unsuccessful in 2021/22 (for £2,000) and this was because the applicant did not have the appropriate accompanying financial documents as required in the application form and was unable to obtain it in time. The applicant was given advice on the telephone and via email on how best to address this. A follow-up appointment was made by the applicant to discuss how best to obtain the financial documentation required and how best to resubmit the application. However, the appointment was changed then cancelled by the applicant so unfortunately it did not take place.

Potential applicants are encouraged to contact the Democratic Support Officer (DSO) with their project idea before submission for appropriate advice and guidance on the suitability of those projects for the Community Grant Fund, based on the grants criteria. The application form lists the criteria and contains a pro-forma version which demonstrates the information applicants should provide.

If a potential project would not be appropriate for the Town Council Community Grants Fund, then the DSO will direct the enquirer to more suitable local/national grant funds.

#### 6. NEW APPLICANTS/METHODS OF PROMOTION

There were 6 new applicants in 2021/22 and 2 applicants who had not applied since 2010 and 2014 respectively.

<u>Methods of Promotion</u>	<u>How many applicants found out about the Fund via this method</u>
Previous recent applicants	15
RLSTC Twitter	2
RLSTC Facebook	2
RLSTC website	3
Poster	2
WDC Arts social media	2

## 7. REPEAT APPLICANTS

Groups/organisations which have submitted four or more successful applications within the last five years (2016-2021):

- ARC CIC
- Art in the Park
- Leamington Music Festival
- Myton Hospice
- New Hope Counselling
- Saturday Friendship Group (St Peter's RC Church)
- Warwickshire & Northampton Air Ambulance

## 8. MONITORING

Every successful applicant is issued with a monitoring form with their formal notification of their grant with a polite instruction to return the completed form once the project has been successfully completed. It is made clear within the application form that no future applications to the Community Grant Fund may be made by the applicant until a monitoring form is received for the project previously completed. The monitoring form is also available on the Town Council website.

The DSO requests outstanding monitoring forms every December and has a file of hard copies in the Town Council office. From 2022, monitoring forms received from completed projects will be scanned and sent to members every six months (April and October) for their information.

From May 2022, the Community Grant Applications list will include a column to confirm if each applicant has submitted the requisite quotes and a column to confirm if applicants have returned their monitoring form for their previous grant-funded project (if there was one) (see Appendix 1).

## 9. CONCLUSIONS

The number of applications for funding to support Covid-19 recovery/social isolation reduction/health and wellbeing projects remained static in 2021/22 as pandemic restrictions were lifted then partially reimposed following the surge in the Omicron variant. Following the comprehensive national vaccination programme and the lifting

of all restrictions at the end of February 2022, more projects would be expected in 2022/23 which are actively aimed at activities and events which bring people together, support mental wellbeing and promote Leamington Spa as a place to visit. Applications to support events or projects which require the involvement of numbers of people should still be able to show flexibility in terms of being able to be held online, or to demonstrate the adoption of robust Covid-19 safety measures including an appropriate risk assessment.

The number of sports/heritage/environment applications remained very low in 2021/22 as lockdowns were imposed and restrictions were reintroduced following lockdown liftings. 2021/22 was seen as a good opportunity for groups (particularly sports groups) to apply for funding from the Community Grant Fund in order to benefit from new equipment or other capital improvements. This then would ensure they were in the best position to restart their activities and have the best possible offer for participants, post Covid-19. In response to this, Leamington RUFC applied for and were granted funding for ground maintenance equipment, RLS Canoe Club were successful in their bid for new boats and the Sea Scouts were able to obtain new activity equipment for expeditions. This area of focus for grant funding should be maintained in 2022/23, as should those of improving skills/addressing unemployment and supporting young people.

The Community Grant Fund is well-promoted by the Town Council via social media, website, posters and word of mouth as well as by the WDC Arts Team. A stronger relationship between the Town Council and Warwickshire CAVA and between the Town Council and the WDC Community Partnership team would be helpful in terms of robust promotion and will be further pursued in 2022/23.

An obstacle for potential applicants is a lack of knowledge about how to complete a detailed application form - addressing the appropriate criteria; clearly explaining the benefit(s) of their project for residents; understanding which financial documents are required and knowing how best to provide evidence to support claims made in the application form. One possible solution would be to offer an annual support and troubleshooting workshop at the Town Hall whereby potential applicants could go through the form, discuss issues, ask questions and feel more confident about submitting an application. This would also have the intended outcome of increasing the number of strong applications and could be promoted strongly to groups from which applications are lacking – heritage, environment, young people and skills/employment. The grant application form has been reviewed and is attached here as Appendix 2 (proposed updates highlighted).

The Town Council continues to fund an increasing number of health/wellbeing/care projects brought forward in Leamington Spa. Five of the seven successful repeat applicant organisations deliver aid projects year on year across Leamington Spa. It is expected that more organisations which have successfully applied for Community Grant funding will become repeat applicants as the scale and depth of the effects of the pandemic on the community becomes clearer as 2022 progresses. The need for such projects continues to grow exponentially and often the sole or main funder is the Town Council.