

# LITTLE BEALINGS PARISH COUNCIL

## ANGELA COBBOLD HALL

### INTRODUCTION

1. The Parish Council has received a request from Ropeth, a Charitable Trust which owns the Angela Cobbold Hall ('ACH') in The Street, for a donation of £400 towards the cost of the installation of a new kitchen at the ACH.
2. This report sets out Ropeth's reasons for the request and relevant considerations for the Council when determining whether to make a donation.

### THE REQUEST

3. The request is made by Ropeth, registered charity number 1181869. The Charity Commission website records the Charity's Object[ive]s to be:

"The charity's objects are the provision and maintenance of a village hall for the use of inhabitants of Little Bealings parish and the neighbouring area without distinction of political, religious or other opinions, including use for meetings, lectures and classes [and] other forms of recreation and leisure time occupation, with the object of improving the conditions of life for the inhabitants."

4. The aim of the Charity is stated to be:

"The aim is to provide a small and affordable venue for a variety of social and charitable events and activities to promote health and wellbeing."

5. The request is:

"A grant of £400, bearing in mind that Ropeth are able to provide £4,600 of the remaining ceiling figure [for the provision of a kitchen]".

### CONSIDERATIONS

6. **The Council's Powers:** The Council has a power to provide financial support for the running of a village hall under S19(3) of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976. There is no limit to the amount of a grant which could be made to provide recreational facilities, eg equipment.
7. **Financial:** The Council's approved Budget for 2021.22 provides for donations totalling £1,175 to be made as follows:

Village Hall - £250 and John Belstead Playing Field - £500

Fynn Lark News - £250

Locality Donations: Citizens Advice Bureau Leiston - £25, Citizens Advice Bureau Felixstowe - £25, AGE UK - £25, Headway - £25, SAVID - £100 (ie dependent upon organisations being active in the parish)

8. The donations to the CAB and AGE UK have not been made to date. AGE UK has confirmed that it is unable to provide confirmation that it is active in the parish. Any donation to SAVID would be considered later in the year.
9. A donation of £400 would therefore be beyond the scope of the agreed Donation budget for 2021/22. However, the budget anticipated a surplus of £1,236.16 in order to increase its reserves as recommended:

"General Reserve The generally accepted recommendation with regard to the appropriate minimum level of a Smaller Authority's General Reserve is that this should be maintained at between three (3) and twelve (12) months Net Revenue Expenditure (N R E). Net Revenue Expenditure (subject to any planned surplus or deficit) is effectively Precept\Levy less any Loan Repayment and/or amounts included in Precept\Levy for Capital Projects and transfers to Earmarked Reserves. The reason for the wide range (3 to 12 months) is to cater for the large variation in sizes of individual authorities. The smaller the authority the closer the figure should be to 12 months N R E, the larger the authority the nearer to 3 months. In practice, any authority with an N R E in excess of £200,000 should plan on 3 months equivalent General Reserve. In all of this it is important that each authority adopt, as a General Reserve policy, the level appropriate to their size and situation and plan their Budget so as to ensure that the adopted level is maintained. Changes in activity levels/range of services provided will inevitably lead to changes in the requisite minimum level of General Reserve in order to provide working capital for those activities." (Advice from JPAG in Governance & Accountability for Smaller Authorities in England issued in 2019)

10. The Council currently has reserves of £614.03.

## **PROPOSED RESOLUTIONS**

- The Council resolves whether to make a donation to the Ropeth Charitable Trust to contribute to the installation of a new kitchen at the Angela Cobbold Hall only.
- Ropeth be advised that if it wishes the Council to make financial contributions to the maintenance or improvement of the ACH in future years, it provides full information at least a month before the Council's meeting in November, at which its annual budget is set.