

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

13 FEBRUARY 2012

S.137 OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 - APPLICATIONS FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

REPORT OF THE TOWN CLERK

1. The Town Council has received two requests for financial assistance from the West Penwith Community Bus Association and Shelter Cornwall.
2. The West Penwith Community Bus Association (WPCBA) has been operating for 24 years and provides transport services to the local community, where public transport is unable to meet specific needs. Currently there are four mini-buses operating, three of which are wheelchair accessible. A dial-a-ride demand service is provided with flexible pick up and drop off points. The service covers nine villages in the West Penwith area, with a large percentage of the passengers being the elderly and disabled.
3. WPCBA is run on a voluntary basis and is a non-profit making organisation. Most of the income comes from concessionary fares, student travel cards and fixed payments to provide certain services. Cornwall Council has not increased any of these payments rates in the last three years, whereas costs have escalated (fuel costs have increased by 18% and insurance by 20%), with no way of increasing income the WPCBA is finding it increasingly difficult to continue operating. A review of the payment system for the whole of Cornwall is currently under review, the outcome of which should be known by the new financial year. WPCBA would welcome any financial assistance from the Town Council to help towards its annual running costs.
4. The Town Council has made the following previous financial contributions to WPCBA:-
 - £25.00 Sept 2002
5. The Town Council has also received a request for financial assistance from Shelter Cornwall.
6. Over the past 12 months this organisation has helped over 1,000 people with housing or homeless problems, many with children and living in overcrowded / unsuitable accommodation or about to be made homeless. With recent changes to housing benefit, projected increase in mortgage repossessions and the demand for private rented accommodation it is anticipated that the number of people seeking the assistance of Shelter in 2012 will increase further.
7. Shelter currently provides a number of direct services for Cornwall such as specialist advice and advocacy service on all aspects of housing law and the development of local initiatives and projects to prevent homelessness and improve conditions locally.
8. Shelter is requesting financial support to help towards its annual running costs. Examples of how the money might be spent are: £30.00 would pay for an adviser to spend an hour with a family and issue court proceedings to prevent them being evicted from their home. £750 would pay for a specialist housing solicitor to help an individual with an advance legal housing problem, including court appearances.

9. The Town Council has made the following previous financial contributions to Shelter:-

- £100 March 2010
- £100 March 2009
- £100 April 2008
- £100 December 2004

10. There is currently £3,483.00 remaining in the 2011 / 2012 budget for grant applications.

11. The Town Council's instructions on this are sought.

Elaine Baker
Town Clerk

Background papers: Letters dated 18 January 2012 from the WPCBA and 2 February 2012 from Shelter.