

Beaminster and Villages Local Area Partnership

14 September 2018

The Shadow Executive Committee

The Future of Voluntary and Community Sector Grants Proposals Meeting September 17th 2018

I am writing to you in advance of the above meeting relating to Local Area Partnership cessation of funding for Beaminster and Villages Local Area Partnership (BAVLAP).

BAVLAP is a partnership which includes Beaminster Town Council, 15 local Parish Councils and organisational partners including; the Yarn Barton Centre, Beaminster Children's Centre, Magna Housing, Beaminster churches, POPP, Dorset Police, Beaminster Town Council, West Dorset District Council, Dorset County Council and a number of local community groups, organisations and individuals working to improve the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of the BAVLAP area and its community since 2007.

The issue of cessation of funding for our LAP at the end of this year was discussed at our AGM (13/09/2018).

Concerns raised by members included:

- The loss of a district-wide collaborative forum that brings communities and service delivery organisations together which saves money and avoids duplication and collaborative funding bids bringing money into the district to fund community projects.
- There would be diminished or lost wider community networks with whom the council can engage and consult on service delivery, priorities and wider matters which could mean the council would see less good quality community information, less collaborative action to meet priorities which could be more expensive in the long-term.
- The breakdown of existing relationships with networks /community can lead to loss of trust & respect for the council and its partners. This would take years to rebuild and has been shown in many areas that this does happen
- A smaller or lost communication network into parishes which could lead to reduced community capacity and volunteering and less community activity into local projects. This is of great concern particularly rurally where there are many projects run by volunteers in the community working to support the isolated vulnerable members of our society saving the local government a large amount of money every year. This is particularly important as the Adult Social Care Budget goes up year on year.
- What will happen to the current projects that BAVLAP is supporting? How will they be continued or wrapped up eg; Dementia Friendly Projects.

BAVLAP has achieved a great deal over the 11 years it has been in service. BAVLAP volunteer hours, alone, over the last eleven years amount to £67,181.

The LAP enables communities to raise issues and present them with a collective voice to statutory organisations which in turn saves money as one voice saves council staff time and resources.

A way forward would be to uphold the current funding as suggested for other voluntary sector grants for 2019-2020, to allow time for either a legacy from BAVLAP to be produced to support future partnership work in the community or the formation of a self-sustaining group to occur, as a development trust for example.

Yours,

Beaminster and Villages Local Area Partnership