

18th March 2019

Dear James,

Re: Main Grants- draft recommendation and notice of proposed change to funding

I write following the letter and notification of the assessment sheet informing us we had been unsuccessful in our grant application. I appreciate that difficult decisions have had to be made and that there will always be unsuccessful applications, but feel that not all aspects of our application have been marked appropriately, and within the limited word count it was difficult to fully articulate our position. Our keys areas of concern are as follows:

- 1) Q7 was difficult to articulate within the 400-word count and have been criticised for not providing specific date of quantifiable evidence of need. It is difficult to obtain specific data on those at need. However, we do know that a number of individuals that we serve, without our service, would fall into social care without the provision of a regular hot meal and social interaction. If any one of these individuals we can name, fell into needing social care, it would cost the social service budget far more than our grant application.
- 2) Q9 I feel we sold ourselves short on this point. It is our vision to deliver a community-based asset, run and delivered through volunteer base, many of whom are drawn from within the Grove Centre Church. It is this support which enables the centre to run the lunch service and enables a range of others to make use of our services and assets, including SLAM mental health support group, Ageing Well, A.A., counselling services, parenting services, NCT classes, and a variety of health, education and social groups for a range of ages, as reflected in our Annual Report. We do not feel this has been reflected in the evaluation or comments.
- 3) Q14 I believe this has been marked harshly. The evidence that we have reduced our request for support (application-on-application) is evidence of diversification and a broader approach to raising funds. We are making great use of our assets for a range of local needs, and continue to offer free/reduced rates to other key services, by driving commercial activities which subsidise our core vision. We do not believe this is reflected in the evaluation.
- 4) Q15 Again I feel this has been harshly marked. At each grant monitoring visit, the Centre's governance has been recognised as very strong, with clear policies and processes to ensure appropriate mechanisms, allowing both the Grove Centre and the Grove Centre Church to drive forward the vision of the Church to make its buildings a place for people. The Trustees of the Church are closely linked to the Centre, receive monthly feedback on the services, and would ultimately be responsible for any issues which the Centre cannot manage.
- 5) Q23 Again we feel this has been harshly marked. The Church and Management Committee are closely aligned and would ultimately be responsible for stepping into the Grove Centre place should any difficulties arise. As a result, the Church Trustees receive monthly feedback and question the activities and governance of the Centre. This has been evidenced at LBL grant monitoring visits each year for the last 40 years.

We hope that these comments will be considered in the final assessment to enable us to continue our movement towards self-sustainability. The Centre and Church are also in the middle of a large-scale capital fund-raising project, to assist in widening the availability of our building as a community asset. The loss of funding and lunch service will make it harder to demonstrate our work within our community, and hence diminish the chances of providing an improved community asset in the southern corner of Lewisham. We feel that, for the sake of one final grant round, this could be an opportunity potentially lost.

Yours sincerely

Ian Warren (on behalf of the Grove Centre Management Committee)