

PERTH AND KINROSS COUNCIL**Perth Common Good Fund Committee****16 December 2015****Applications for Financial Assistance****Report by Director (Environment)**

The report asks Perth Common Good Fund Committee to consider 21 applications for financial assistance.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Perth and Kinross Council owns land and property which forms part of the common good of the former burghs in Perth & Kinross and has a statutory duty in terms of section 15 of the Local Government etc. (Scotland) Act 1994 to administer this land and property “having regard to the interests of the inhabitants” of those former burghs. This duty also applies to the administration of the associated common good funds.
- 1.2 The Common Good Funds have traditionally demonstrated their support to local residents and organisations by distributing grant. These grant awards allow individuals and local organisations to carry out a wide range of community based activities. For each application, the level of previous grant awarded is listed, but variances between years could be due to the numbers of participants. Retrospective applications are not accepted. However, if an application is received before the activities take place and cannot be considered at the following meeting because the papers have already been issued, the application will be considered at the following next meeting even if the activities have taken place between meetings. Therefore the Committee decision will only be known after the activities have taken place, and if the grant is not awarded, the applicant will have to fund the activities from its own funds.

2. PROPOSALS**Perth Academy Pupil**

- 2.1 An application has been received from a Perth Academy pupil seeking a grant towards the cost of taking part in a school Geography trip to Italy in June 2016. The total cost of the trip is £680 and the applicant has applied for a grant of £100. The applicant has never previously benefited from the fund. It is recommended that a grant of £100 is awarded in line with the guidance (see Appendix 1 – Criteria 9). The grant will contribute to social inclusion.

Recommendation

- 2.2 Perth Academy pupil be awarded a grant of £100 towards the cost of the school Geography trip to Italy in June 2016.

Perth Film Society

2.3 An application has been received from Perth Film Society seeking a grant towards the cost of hire at the Concert Hall for their 2015/16 season. The total cost of the hire is £2,523 and the applicant has applied for £200. The applicant previously benefited as detailed below. It is recommended that a grant of £200 is awarded in line with the guidance (see Appendix 1 – Criteria 2).

2.4 Grants awarded to Perth Film Society from the Perth Common Good Fund in:

2014/15	£300
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Recommendation

2.5 Perth Film Society be awarded a grant of £200 towards the cost of hire at the Concert Hall for their 2015/16 season.

Friends of Stepping Stone Theatre Company

2.6 An application has been received from Friends of Stepping Stone Theatre Company seeking a grant towards the cost of their trip to Pitlochry Festival Theatre on 24th September 2015 for 31 people. All members are adults with learning difficulties and the visit will allow them to observe a professionally presented musical production, giving them the opportunity to enhance their own acting technique by observing professional artistes performing on stage. The cost of the visit is £300 for transport and the applicant has applied for £150. The applicant previously benefited as detailed below. It is recommended that a grant of £150 is awarded in line with the guidance (see Appendix 1 – Criteria 10).

2.7 Grants awarded to Friends of Stepping Stone Theatre Company from the Perth Common Good Fund in:

2012/13	£130
2013/14	£140
2014/15	£145

Recommendation

2.8 Friends of Stepping Stone Theatre Company be awarded a grant of £150 towards the cost their trip to Pitlochry Festival Theatre on 24th September 2015.

Kids of Letham Association

2.9 An application has been received from the Kids of Letham Association seeking a grant towards the cost of attending a Christmas Pantomime. Total costs are £450 and the applicant has requested any contribution available from the Perth Common Good Fund. The applicant has previously benefited as detailed below. 10 people, age 17+ will take part; together with 40 under 17 years of age. It is recommended that a grant of up to £225 is awarded in line

with the guidance (Appendix 1 – Criteria 10). This is paid at 50% of the actual costs or £7 per person, whichever is the lesser. The grant will contribute to social inclusion.

- 2.10 Grants awarded to Kids of Letham Association from the Perth Common Good Fund in:

2013/14	£315
2015/16	£350

Recommendation

- 2.11 Kids of Letham be awarded a grant of £225 towards the cost of attending a Christmas Pantomime.

Fair City Junior Football Club

- 2.12 An application has been received from Fair City Junior Football Club seeking a grant towards the cost of installing a Defibrillator Secure Cabinet at their home ground at Huntingtower Park. The Club has been in existence for just over a year and provides football coaching to children aged between 3 & 12. They have acquired a new Defibrillator from the British Heart Foundation and this application is for funding to provide secure storage in their clubhouse. The total cost of the installation is £1,600 and the applicant is seeking a grant of £1,000. The applicant has never previously benefited from the fund. It is recommended that a grant of £800 is awarded in line with the guidance (see Appendix 1 – Criteria 4).

Recommendation

- 2.13 Fair City Junior Football Club be awarded a grant of £800 towards the cost of installing a Defibrillator Secure Cabinet at their home ground at Huntingtower Park.

Perth Grammar School

- 2.14 An application has been received from Perth Grammar School seeking a grant towards the costs of sending 5 pupils (who due to financial circumstances would be unable to participate) on the Barcelona/Catalan Experience Trip in June 2016. The total costs for the trip amount to £27,300 for 42 pupils at a cost of £650 per pupil. 6 adults and 42 pupils will make the trip. The applicant has applied for £1,500. The applicant has previously benefited as detailed below. It is recommended that a grant of £1,500 (£300 for each pupil) be awarded in line with the guidance (see Appendix 1 – Criteria 11). The grant will contribute to social inclusion and the promotion of learning.

2.15 Grants awarded to Perth Grammar School from the Perth Common Good Fund in:

2014/15	£2,213	(School Awards)
	£1,500	(June 2105 Barcelona/Catalan Trip; awarded in Feb 2015)

Recommendation

2.16 Perth Grammar School be awarded a grant of £1,500 (£300 for each pupil) towards the costs of sending 5 pupils on the Barcelona/Catalan Experience Trip in June 2016.

Letham Old People's Club

2.17 An application has been received from Letham Old People's Club seeking a grant towards the costs of their Christmas lunch for 70 people. Totals costs are £840 and the applicant is applying for £840. The applicant has previously benefited as detailed below. It is recommended that a grant of £420 be awarded in line with the guidance (see Appendix 1 – Criteria 10). This is paid at 50% of the actual costs or £7 per person, whichever is the lesser. The grant will contribute to social inclusion.

2.18 Grants awarded to Letham Old People's Club in:

2012/13	£1,190	(2 applications for £665 & £525)
2013/14	£1,129	(2 applications for £569 & £560)
2014/15	£800	(2 applications for £450 & £350)
2015/16	£354	

Recommendation

2.19 Letham Old People's Club be awarded a grant to a maximum of £420.

St John's RC Academy Pupil

2.20 An application has been received from a St John's RC Academy pupil seeking a grant towards the cost of volunteering in Romania from 10th - 18th October 2015. The trip will include 6 days volunteering at a hospital; a visit to St Joseph's School and 1 day exploring Bucharest. The total cost of the trip is £500 and the applicant is applying for £250. The applicant has never previously benefited from the fund. It is recommended that a grant of £100 is awarded in line with the guidance (see Appendix 1 – Criteria 9 as trip is for one week). The grant will contribute to social inclusion and education.

Recommendation

2.21 St John's RC Academy Pupil be awarded a grant of £100.

Perth Academy Pupil

- 2.22 An application has been received from a Perth Academy pupil seeking a grant towards the cost of participating in the Perth Academy World Challenge expedition to India (Himalaya) & Rajasthan for 4 weeks, which includes voluntary work in a local village. The total cost is £3,580 and the applicant is applying for a grant of £250. The applicant has never previously benefited from the fund. It is recommended that a grant of £250 is awarded in line with the guidance (see Appendix 1 – Criteria 8). The grant will contribute to social inclusion and education.

Recommendation

- 2.23 Perth Academy Pupil be awarded a grant of £250.

Perth City Club

- 2.24 An application has been received from Perth City Club seeking a grant towards the costs of their Christmas lunch for 45 people. Totals costs are £675 and the applicant is applying for a contribution. The applicant has previously benefited as detailed below. It is recommended that a grant of £315 be awarded in line with the guidance (see Appendix 1 – Criteria 10). This is paid at 50% of the actual costs or £7 per person, whichever is the lesser. The grant will contribute to social inclusion.

- 2.25 Grants awarded to Perth City Club in:

2012/13	£560	
2013/14	£828	(2 applications for £420 & £408)
2014/15	£574	(2 applications for £294 & £280)
2015/16	£245	

Recommendation

- 2.26 Perth City Club be awarded a grant to a maximum of £315.

Perth Academy Pupil

- 2.27 An application has been received from a Perth Academy pupil seeking a grant towards the cost of participating in the Perth Academy World Challenge expedition to India (Himalaya) & Rajasthan, for 4 weeks, which includes voluntary work in a local village. The total cost is £3,580 and the applicant is applying for a grant of £250. The applicant has never previously benefited from the fund. It is recommended that a grant of £250 is awarded in line with the guidance (see Appendix 1 – Criteria 8). The grant will contribute to social inclusion and education.

Recommendation

- 2.28 Perth Academy Pupil be awarded a grant of £250.

Fairfield Lunch Club

- 2.29 An application has been received from Fairfield Lunch Club seeking a grant towards the costs of their Christmas lunch for 45 people. Fairfield Lunch Club runs two lunch clubs per week for the over 50s in the Fairfield Area providing lunches, assisting people with diets and reducing social isolation. Total cost of the Christmas Lunch is £445 and the applicant is applying for a grant of £315. The applicant has never previously benefited from the fund. It is recommended that a grant of £223 be awarded in line with the guidance (see Appendix 1 – Criteria 10). This is paid at 50% of the actual costs or £7 per person, whichever is the lesser. The grant will contribute to social inclusion.

Recommendation

- 2.30 Fairfield Lunch Club be awarded a grant of £223.

St Leonard's in the Field Church

- 2.31 An application has been received from St Leonard's in the Field Church seeking a grant towards the cost of their roof refurbishment project which will take place between November 2015 and June 2016. The overall cost of the project is £218,000. A grant of £100,000 has been awarded from the Government's Listed Places of Worship Fund. Together with their own funds they have circa £198,000 in place, leaving a shortfall of £20,000. Applications have been made to Forteviot, Gannochy Trust and other local sources for a total of £15,000. The applicant is seeking a grant of £5,000 which will complete the funding package. The applicant has previously benefited as detailed below. It is recommended that a grant of £5,000 be awarded in line with the guidance (see Appendix 1 – Criteria 5). The grant will contribute to social inclusion.

- 2.32 Grants awarded to St Leonard's in the Field Church in:

2012/13	£2,000
2013/14	£2,000

Recommendation

- 2.33 St Leonard's in the Field Church be awarded a grant of £5,000. Grant to be subject to all other funding streams being approved.

Headway Perth & Kinross

- 2.34 An application has been received from Headway Perth & Kinross seeking a grant towards the costs of their annual Christmas Pantomime and Dinner Outing for local brain injured people, their families and carers. 50 people will attend. The event is on Saturday 19th December. Total costs are £1,303 and the applicant is seeking a grant of £348. The applicant has previously benefited as detailed below. It is recommended that a grant of £348 be awarded in line with the guidance (see Appendix 1 – Criteria 10). The grant will contribute to social inclusion.

2.35 Grants awarded to Headway Perth & Kinross in:

2012/13	£343 & £385
2013/14	£343 & £427
2014/15	£343 & £243
2015/16	£343

Recommendation

2.36 Headway Perth & Kinross be awarded a grant of £348.

Errol Curling Club

2.37 An application has been received from Errol Curling Club seeking a grant towards the cost of hosting the Welcome the World Seniors Curling event at the Dewars Centre in Perth from 18th – 24th September 2016. Hosted by Errol Curling Club who have a membership of 22 and curl at the Dewars Centre, 50 people from Perth & Kinross; 20 from other parts of Scotland and 24 from outside of Scotland will take part. This application fits with the criteria of the Perth Common Good Fund as the majority of beneficiaries and spectators are from Perth. Welcome the World is an international senior curling organisation originating in Canada giving an opportunity for like-minded seniors to be included in curling events. This is an inclusive organisation that allows disabled and able bodied curlers to participate together in the sport of curling. Previous events have been held in Canada 2011-14 & Denmark 2015. Planned events will be held in USA - March 2016; Perth – September 2016; Croatia -2017; and Canada -2018. The total cost is estimated at £11,700 and the applicant has applied for a grant of £1,000. The applicant has never previously benefited from the fund. It is recommended that a grant of £1,000 be awarded in line with the guidance (see Appendix 1 – Criteria 11). The grant will contribute to social inclusion and tourism.

Recommendation

2.38 Errol Curling Club be awarded a grant of £1,000.

Scottish Orchestras

2.39 An application has been received from Scottish Orchestras seeking a grant towards the cost of venue hire of Perth Concert Hall for six concerts from October 2015 to April 2016. The performance of six concerts in Perth Concert Hall with associated creative learning projects in primary and secondary schools in Perth & Kinross and community projects for adults aims to meet identified local needs. Discussions have been held with PKC Cultural & Community Services and Education staff to help guide the planning of school and community activity. The overall cost of the series is £180,750 with hire of the Concert Hall and ancillaries is £22,750. The applicant is seeking a grant of £9,500 towards the latter cost. The applicant has previously benefited as detailed below. It is recommended that a grant of £9,500 be awarded in line with the guidance (see Appendix 1 – Criteria 2). The grant will contribute to social inclusion, education and culture.

2.40 Grants awarded to Scottish Orchestras in:

2012/13	£8,000
2013/14	£9,000
2014/15	£9,500

Recommendation

2.41 Scottish Orchestras be awarded a grant of £9,500.

Dalreoch Friendship Club

2.42 An application has been received from Dalreoch Friendship Club seeking a grant towards the cost of their Christmas Lunch. The total cost for 12 members is £275. The applicant is seeking a grant of £210. The applicant has previously benefited as detailed below. It is recommended that a grant of £84 be awarded in line with the guidance (see Appendix 1 – Criteria 10). This is paid at 50% of the actual costs or £7 per person, whichever is the lesser. The grant will contribute to social inclusion.

2.43 Grants awarded to Dalreoch Friendship Club in:

2014/15	£94
2015/16	£105

Recommendation

2.44 Dalreoch Friendship Club be awarded a grant of £84.

Perth Student

2.45 An application has been received from a Perth Student, who is a medical student at the University of Dundee, seeking a grant towards the cost of participating in a six-week medical research project in Mulanje, Malawi to study gaps in antenatal healthcare. The trip includes voluntary work implementing a new point of care test within the community and assessing the feasibility of sustainability of the project within the community. The project will run from 18 January 2016 to 29 February 2016. The total cost is £1,370 and the applicant is seeking a grant of £250. The applicant has never previously benefited from the Fund. It is recommended that a grant of £250 be awarded in line with the guidance (see Appendix 1 – Criteria 8).

Recommendation

2.46 Perth Student be awarded a grant of £250.

PLUS Perth & Kinross

- 2.47 An application has been received from PLUS Perth & Kinross seeking a grant towards the cost of their members' Christmas party. The total cost for 35 people is £1,025. The applicant is seeking a grant of £525. The applicant has previously benefited as detailed below. It is recommended that a grant of £245 be awarded in line with the guidance (see Appendix 1 – Criteria 10). This is paid at 50% of the actual costs or £7 per person, whichever is the lesser.

Grants awarded to PLUS Perth & Kinross in:

2013/14	£630
2014/15	£925

Recommendation

- 2.48 PLUS Perth & Kinross be awarded a grant of £245.

Live Active Leisure Ltd

- 2.49 An application has been received from Live Active Leisure seeking a grant towards the cost of their No Limits Cycling Project. The project is for older people and people with disabilities and special needs, giving everyone a chance to get cycling. The initial 1-year pilot project, with around 100 participants, will finish in March 2016. The successful pilot project was run with borrowed bikes from a national project. The intention is to create a permanent project which will launch in April 2016. This will require the purchase of 16 specialist bikes at an estimated cost of £35,000 plus an additional £2,000 for storage facilities. The applicant indicates that they can't be entirely specific about which bikes at this stage but the funding is for a range of adaptive bikes, for example: side-by-side; semi-recumbent; hand-cycles; and a range of accessories: lumber supports; harnesses; footplates; leg supports; helmets etc. The total cost of the project for the first year is £75,000. The applicant is requesting a grant of £20,000 to help fund the bikes and storage facility, the total cost of which is £37,000. It is anticipated that 60% of the activity will take place within Perth and 40% in the rest of Perth and Kinross. Therefore, 60% of the bikes and storage costs can be attributed to Perth – £22,200. In line with the guidance (see Appendix 1 – Criteria 4), a grant of up to 50% of the costs (£11,100) can be awarded. The grant will contribute to social inclusion.

Grants awarded to Live Active Leisure from Perth Common Good Fund in:

2015/16	£10,000	Live Active @ 50 project
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Recommendation

- 2.50 Live Active Leisure has already been awarded a grant of £10,000 from Perth Common Good Fund in the current financial year. It is recommended that the Committee considers this application.

Home Pregnancy Crisis Centre

- 2.51 An application has been received from the Hope Pregnancy Crisis Centre seeking a grant towards the cost of delivering a programme of lessons to schools (S1 to S6) from August 2015 to July 2016. The programme will raise awareness of the Hope Centre and conveys that it is a safe, non-judgemental environment to come to and talk about unplanned pregnancy. The cost of the programme is £10,000 and the applicant is seeking a grant of £2,000. The applicant has never previously benefited from the fund. At its last meeting, the Committee deferred the decision and asked for more information on existing Council service level agreement with the applicant and if the proposed activities were duplicating any activities already provided. The applicant indicated that no other Council funding is provided and therefore no agreement is in place.
- 2.52 Education & Children's Services (ECS) indicated that the applicant is affiliated to the Association of Christian Counsellors and as an authority we do not promote their teachings, but individual schools may choose to invite them in to deliver lessons alongside school staff. Lessons have always been offered free of charge. The applicant has indicated that lessons have already been booked by Perth High School, Perth Grammar and Crieff High School. ECS indicated that the lessons do not link with the Curriculum for Excellence Relationships, Sexual Health and Parenthood (RSHP) experiences and outcomes.
- 2.53 If the Hope Pregnancy Crisis Centre were not able to deliver in Perth and Kinross Council schools, teachers are more than capable of delivering this work. A new framework for RSHP 3-18 has been put together by a Tayside wide partnership including Dundee, Angus, Perth and Kinross Council and NHS. This has been rolled out into all our primary and secondary schools and work has been done with training for school staff, partners and parents. The programme has been met very positively both locally and nationally and fulfils all the requirements of RSHP within Curriculum for Excellence.
- 2.54 It is recommended that the Committee considers the additional information provided in making a decision on the application. If the Committee agrees to support the request, a grant of £2,000 can be awarded in line with the guidance (see Appendix 1 – Criteria 12). The grant will contribute to social inclusion.

Recommendation

- 2.55 It is recommended that the Committee considers this application.

3. RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 The Committee is requested to consider the recommendations in the report.

Author

Name	Designation	Contact Details
Fraser McGowan	Investment Team Leader	Pullar House – 35 Kinnoull Street Perth - Ext. 77954

Approved

Name	Designation	Date
Barbara Renton	Director (Environment)	8 December 2015

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1. IMPLICATIONS, ASSESSMENTS, CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

Strategic Implications	Yes / None
Community Plan / Single Outcome Agreement	Yes
Corporate Plan	Yes
Resource Implications	
Financial	Yes
Workforce	No
Asset Management (land, property, IST)	No
Assessments	
Equality Impact Assessment	Yes
Strategic Environmental Assessment	Yes
Sustainability (community, economic, environmental)	Yes
Legal and Governance	None
Risk	None
Consultation	
Internal	Yes
External	None
Communication	
Communications Plan	None

1. Strategic Implications

Community Plan / Single Outcome Agreement

- 1.1 The proposals will contribute to the Community Plan's aim of safe, healthy and inclusive communities and the outcome of communities will have improved quality of life. The recommendations contained within this report are in accordance with the priorities of Perth Common Good Fund's criteria for financial assistance.

Corporate Plan

- 1.2 The proposals will contribute to the Corporate Plan's objectives of developing educated, responsible and informed citizens and the outcome of people are ready for life and work. The recommendations contained within this report are in accordance with the priorities of Perth Common Good Fund's criteria.

2. Resource Implications

Financial

- 2.1 The Head of Finance has been consulted and has indicated agreement with the proposals. The recommendation contained within this report will be funded from the contributions to organisations provision for 2015/16.

3. Assessments

Equality Impact Assessment

- 3.1 Under the equality Act 2010, the Council is required to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between equality groups. An equality impact assessment needs to be carried out for functions, policies, procedures or strategies in relation to race, gender and disability and other relevant protected characteristics. This supports the Council's legal requirement to comply with the duty to assess and consult on relevant new and existing policies.
- 3.2 The function, policy, procedure or strategy presented in this report was considered under the Corporate Equalities Impact Assessment process (EqIA) with the following outcome: No further action is required as the items summarised in the committee report do not require further assessment as they do not have an impact on people's wellbeing or equality protected characteristics.

Strategic Environmental Assessment

- 3.3 Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is a legal requirement under the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 that applies to all qualifying plans, programmes and strategies, including policies (PPS). The matters presented in this report were considered under the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 and no further action is required as it does not qualify as a PPS as defined by the Act and is therefore exempt.

Sustainability

- 3.4 Under the provisions of the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 the Council has to discharge its duties in a way which contributes to the achievement of sustainable development. In terms of the Climate Change Act, the Council has a general duty to demonstrate its commitment to sustainability and the community, environmental and economic impacts of its actions. The proposals in this report will encourage social equity and opportunities for cultural, leisure, community, sport and other activities.

4. Consultation

Internal

- 4.1 The Head of Democratic Services, the Head of Finance and the Head of Legal Services have been consulted.

2. BACKGROUND PAPERS

21 Applications for financial assistance

3. APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Common Good Funds within Perth & Kinross Area – Criteria
Appendix 2: Thank You Letter

COMMON GOOD FUNDS WITHIN PERTH AND KINROSS AREA CRITERIA

Within the boundary of the relevant common good area and if funding is available, applications will be considered from individuals either in full time education or of senior citizen status and from groups whose members qualify on the same basis or which are operating within the same boundary.

1. Christmas lighting - Firework displays up to a maximum of 50% of the total costs
2. Organisation of events/games/festivals up to a maximum of 50% of the total costs
3. Prizes at events/games/festivals
4. Acquisition of equipment - consideration on merits up to a maximum of 50%
5. Capital grants for provision/improvement of facilities - consideration on merits up to a maximum of 50% (the facilities must be available to the general public)
6. School/youth exchanges
7. School prizes
8. Voluntary work overseas
 - 6 months or more: £100 - **Perth Common Good Fund only**: up to £400 per individual
 - 1 – 5 months: £100 - **Perth Common Good Fund only**: up to £250 per individual
9. Attendance at summer schools/events
 - Less than 1 month but more than 2 weeks: £100 **Perth Common Good Fund only**: up to £150 per individual
 - One/two weeks: up to £100 per individual
10. Excursions/Parties (up to 2 per year per group)
 - Contribution of 50% towards the actual costs. Each organisation is allowed 2 applications during the course of a financial year. **Perth Common Good Fund only**: overall grant to be capped at up to £7 per individual with an overall maximum grant of up to £700.

11. Visits by and from School/Youth/Sport/Music groups

- Contributions of up to £600 for groups less than 20 individuals and up to £1,000 for groups over 20 individuals for youth groups, senior citizen or vulnerable groups for activities exceeding 1 day. **Perth Common Good Fund only and for schools:** Contribution of 50% of the costs up to a maximum of £300 for each young person who due to financial difficulties are unable to participate in an extra curriculum school activity outwith the boundaries of Perth, exceeding 1 day and organised by a school. It will be the responsibility of each school to state the purpose of the extra curriculum school activity and identify such young person and advise the Common Good Fund accordingly.

12. Any purpose where it can be demonstrated that there is a benefit to the community of the common good area

The following is not eligible:

- Assistance with further or higher education fees
- Charity based sponsored walk/cycle/canoe etc.
- Town twinning activities other than those qualifying through the age/occupation criteria
- Organisations with religious/political associations where there are restrictions on usage or availability
- Core funding of the Voluntary sector
- Assistance with rental of premises

Perth Common Good Fund,
Perth and Kinross council,
2 High Street
Perth,
PH15 PH

RECEIVED
25 SEP 2015

Wednesday 23rd September

Dear Perth Common Good Fund,

I am writing to thank you for your generosity in helping me to fundraise for my year overseas with Project Trust. Your support meant that last August I was able to achieve my target and travel to Honduras to spend the year teaching.

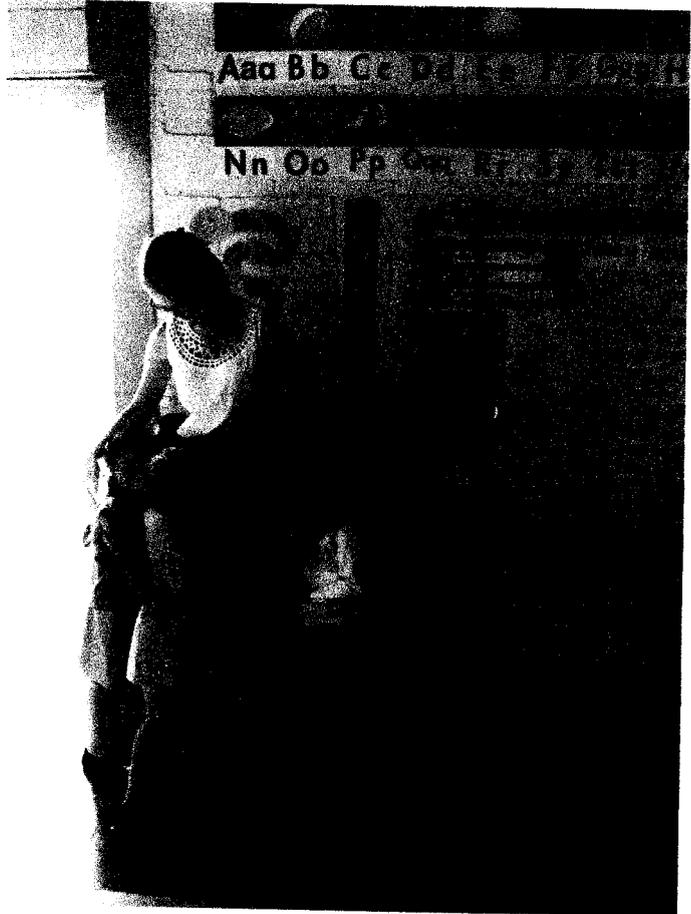
For most of the year I taught Preparatoria which is the year before first grade and towards the end I got to teach first grade. This class of eighteen five year olds was a challenge at first but as I grew into the role of being a teacher so too did my love for them. I lived with a Honduran family while I was out there and they taught me so much about how important a strong family is. I have attached a copy of a short report on my year.

It has been the most incredible year of growing, learning and travelling and I wanted you to know that I am so grateful for your part in that.

Thank you,

Isobel Houston.

I remember it too. That excruciating moment when, desperately trying to get the attention of your teacher, arms aching and she's still not turning around: "Mum!" Suddenly the whole room is hushed and that crippling shrinking feeling before the whole classroom erupts with laughter. The only difference is that it was "Mami!" and it was me who had to quell the giggles. It suddenly seemed so long ago that it was me with the burning cheeks.



I decided to spend a year teaching in Honduras in the summer of my lower sixth when I went on a selection course on the island of Coll. From then until my departure in August 2014, I wrote, baked and chutnied my way to the fundraising target. It was hard work but it really made me invested in my year and when things got difficult I only had to think of all the friends and family who helped me get out there to make me carry on.

Arriving just days before the school year started meant that finding your feet was more a case of realising you were already running. I was teaching a gaggle of 18 five year olds in a class called Preparatoria, the year before first grade. It took a while to get my head around how to introduce the foreign concept of numbers and letters but with the help of countless songs, dances and of course Samuel David Ramos (the counting caterpillar beautifully named by my kids) we managed.





It was, to begin with the most testing thing I have ever had to do, who would have thought that controlling the daily ruckus during the hokey pokey, or getting them to sit still during circle time would obscure anything I had to do whilst at Coll. In all honesty, teaching did not come naturally to me and to start with these riotous little people who didn't

speaking any English seemed to be a force that I had to control and caused me a lot of anxiety. However, as they got to know me better and as I grew to love them teaching became more of an instinct. I became more adventurous. We had themed days: pyjama party, come dressed as what you want to be when you grow up, crazy hat day and more. I also became much more creative and resourceful eating a lot of cornflakes so that I could make a maths machine and post office. We even put on a Billy goats gruff play (complete with homemade costumes!). I loved seeing their faces light up and hearing about them telling their parents about what we had been doing that day.

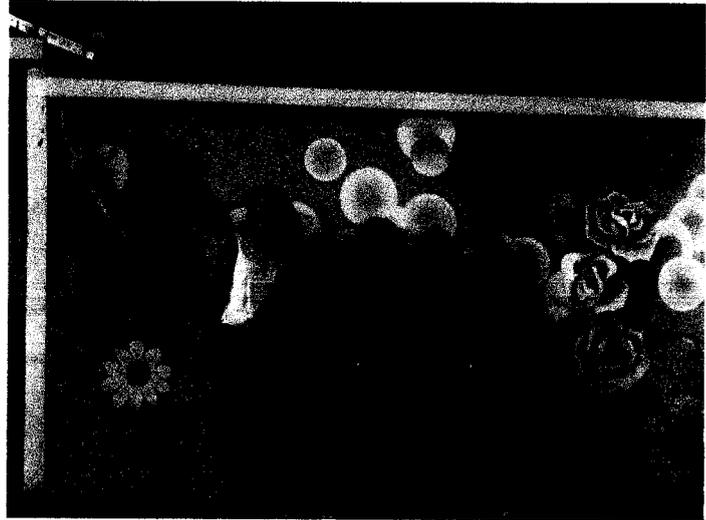
In April Project Trust decided to move our project. This meant new school, new grade, and new faces. It was extremely difficult to say goodbye to my Prepa kids especially after having such an amazing connection with them and at first I felt that I would never be able to have that bond with the next class. However, by then I had experience in the classroom and after stomping around singing "I am the music man, I come from far away and I can play.." at the tops of our voices I immediately felt lucky for being able to teach such a lively class. Teaching first grade meant that I could take everything that bit further. I loved organising lots of science experiments to celebrate earth day, we had exploding volcanoes, solar powered s'more ovens, and other shaving foam fun!

Teaching may not have come easily but this year has definitely confirmed the saying that 'life begins at the end of your comfort zone'. I learnt things from being a teacher that I feel very grateful for; patience, confidence, empathy



and of course in Honduras flexibility!

I was living in a place called Siguatepeque, which was a mountain town in the centre of Honduras. Although relatively small it had a great community spirit that I took advantage of, getting involved with charity running races, the flower festival and a dance show. Through doing these extra events I met new people and was able to establish a group of friends in the running club and also in the cycling club. Weekends were always busy and we often travelled around Honduras. It is such a stunning landscape, extreme beauty in the scale of the mountains and lakes and intensity of colours. It's reputation in the media means that travellers avoid it. Whilst this is a great shame for the country's economy, for me it was part of the magic as it felt like a well kept secret, untrodden by swarms of tourists.



We lived humbly, using buckets for showers and cooking on the outside oven but after a couple of weeks I started to forget about the inconvenience of watching a pot of water boil as I realised how strong their family were and although it sounds a cliché, rich in so many other, more important ways. Living with a family was the best way into the culture of Honduras that I could have hoped for. For them, family is everything and they definitely taught me how important it is for your actions to reflect this. This meant that as soon as I arrived I became a sister and a daughter to them. This made being separated from my family so much more bearable. Living and working alongside people with a culture meant that I shared in the trials and tribulations of their life. Through this I developed empathy and in a

world where we are increasingly joined up be it from the internet or having refugees in our homes this sense of one world and a better understanding of people I'm sure will help me to grow as a global citizen.



(A Mural in my town: If you never try it, you will never know.)