



COMMUNITY GRANTS FUND APPLICATION

Please answer all questions which are relevant to your organisation – failure to do so may result in a delay in the determination of your application

PROJECT (In no more than 25 words)	Pupil Pals – Intergenerational project bringing joy to isolated people while encouraging openness about mental health in the very young	GRANT AMOUNT REQUESTED	£3,000
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Contact Details

Q1 Name of organisation making application:

Omega – Ending Isolation, Ending Loneliness

Name of contact for this application

Title: Mx First Name: Alexandra Surname: Meek

Position held in the organisation: Grant Fundraiser

Contact Address, including full postcode:

[REDACTED]

Postcode: [REDACTED]

Contact Telephone Number: [REDACTED]

Email address: [REDACTED]

About your organisation

Q2 What type of organisation are you?

Tick (✓) relevant category:

Registered Charity: (✓) Charity Registration Number 1120322

Voluntary Organisation: ()

Company Limited by Guarantee: () Company Number 6196052

Other – Please specify:

Q3 When was your organisation established?

2007

Q4 Briefly describe your organisation.

Describe your organisation, including how many members/users you have, whether there is a subscription fee and the usual activities/services you provide.

If you are a new organisation, describe the services/activities you plan to provide:

Often, the most isolated people are unable to access face to face support due to mental and physical illness, frailty or disability. We work for those people, offering a range of remote befriending that meets them on their terms. With 18 years' experience of supporting some of the most vulnerable people in the country, our services have evolved to have the greatest impact on overall client wellbeing and resilience. Most of our clients are located in the West Midlands and many of those live in Shrewsbury, where Omega's office is based.

We offer free telephone and letter befriending for profoundly lonely, vulnerable people who often can't access face to face support. Fully safeguarded, we monitor, and routinely see improvements in, client wellbeing. We aim to help our clients feel more included in society, on whatever terms they can manage. 72% people say they are more likely to access other services and support, 77% report increased confidence and we have 95% client satisfaction. In 2025-26 we are well on our way to meeting our goal of helping at least 850 people, delivered by a team of hundreds of amazing volunteers.

Q5 If you are a subsidiary of a larger organisation, please state which one.

It is not

Q6 Does your organisation have an agreed Constitution or Memorandum of Association?

Please state which and attach a copy: Memorandum and Articles of Association

Q7 What is your primary source of funding?

The majority of our income comes from grants from Trusts and Foundations. We fundraise on an ongoing basis, approaching grant giving trusts of all sizes. We also receive a small proportion of our income from individual donations and local fundraising events. Our fundraising strategy is set out in a development and grant fundraising plan, linked to our 3-year business plan. We are not reliant upon any single source of funding for more than 20% of our income. We have secured a multi-year grant from The Henry Smith Charity.

Details of the project or activity you are planning

Q8 Describe the projects/activity you plan to use this grant for.

i. Try to be specific about what you will do and how you will do it:

Our goal is to improve the mental wellbeing of at least 50 Shrewsbury adults experiencing profound loneliness, by offering them support through our popular intergenerational programme Pupil Pals. Through this programme, we work with primary schools in Shrewsbury, offering the children a short introductory talk on the topic of loneliness, and then asking them to create art with positive messages which is sent to our lonely clients on their birthday, Christmas and regularly throughout the year.

Pupil Pals is an additional service for clients of our pen pal befriending scheme Letterbox. Our clients are typically vulnerable and very isolated. Letters from their befrienders are often the only piece of post they get that isn't a bill or medical news, and some don't even get Christmas and Birthday cards. Our Letterbox project has, for the last eight years, delivered friendship to our clients' doorsteps, with regular letters written by matched penpals.

"What a lovely surprise it was to receive little Charlotte's...picture...It really put a smile on my face. It makes me feel uplifted and positive....I have put it up on my kitchen wall"

Pupil Pals is also welcomed by primary school teachers as a way to introduce concepts of loneliness and an openness about mental health struggles to their young pupils. It is a practical way of expressing parts of their PHSE and citizenship education.

"We are really pleased we can be part of this project. The children were really shocked and saddened to hear that some people wouldn't receive a card on their birthday, so they are very keen to do this."

The pupils themselves enjoy the process of producing art with positive messages for lonely people, which teaches them that volunteering and helping others can be fun and gratifying. It helps break the stigma around mental health problems early, building personal resilience and playing a part in creating a socially inclusive and caring community.

- ii. Please state how you have identified this need and how the project will benefit the people of Shrewsbury, together with the estimated time span. If you are seeking continuation funding for this project, please provide evidence for this continued need.

Throughout the country, over 9 million adults are often or always lonely. Risk factors that increase the likelihood of loneliness include disability, old age and being a carer. Loneliness and social isolation are as harmful as smoking 15 cigarettes a day, increasing risks of heart attacks, dementia and of course depression and anxiety. GPs say that 1-5 people every day have a doctor's appointments mainly because they are lonely. Tackling loneliness is an effective way of building societal resilience and contributes to overall health, mental and physical.

Loneliness costs the UK economy £32 billion every year and every £1 invested in tackling loneliness saves society £1.26 (all facts from the Jo Cox Commission final report).

Omega has been tackling loneliness since 2012. Most clients reach us through referrers including the NHS, and demand has risen steadily over recent years. We often have a waiting list. Our remote befriending approach means there are no geographical barriers to our help. However, over half our clients live in the West Midlands, and many clients and volunteers are from Shrewsbury, due to our longstanding local connections.

The demographics of Shrewsbury mean that residents are more likely than the general population average to be over 70, in slightly worse health, widowed or disabled. These are all risk factors for loneliness that take the likelihood of Shrewsbury residents feeling lonely beyond the 7.1% national average.

Remote befriending means clients can find community and support without having to leave the house or meet anyone new face to face. Our clients tend to be some of the most vulnerable in society so it's vital that barriers to our services are minimised as much as possible. Our safeguarded Letterbox penpal befriending programme allows clients to feel a part of their befrienders' lives and express themselves openly and creatively. The added friendly 'works of art' from children are very popular with clients who receive them, bringing more delight and happiness as they are opened.

"I am enjoying receiving their sweet cards/drawings. Always nice to have something else coming through the post to look forward to"

We already have 42 Letterbox clients in Shrewsbury and work with three schools and a scout group in the town. So far, 536 drawings have been sent to clients from Shrewsbury Pupil Pals. We are eager to work with other Shrewsbury primary schools and similar organisations, using the Pupil Pals method to help young children understand the importance of communication and kindness to others, while breaking the stigma of poor mental health.

"Thank you so much for the card and the certificate, the children were very pleased to receive these. We were also overjoyed to receive the comments from Rosemary, Frances and David. It is so lovely to hear how the cards had brightened their days. The children felt so proud."

iii. How many people from the Parish of Shrewsbury do you expect to benefit directly from your project or activity?

374

iv. Please indicate which of the key pillars of the Council's Vision are met and how:

Pillars	Met	How
Building Resilient Communities For Shrewsbury	yes	We take annual client surveys. In our latest: -88% have an increased sense of purpose -84% note increased confidence -76% have more contact with their social network Research shows that all are factors associated with building resilience. "It's helped my mental wellbeing. I have a better outlook on life, knowing that people care for me." "...helped me change my mindset." "Finding positive things to write to my penpal about has made me recognise the good news in my life." "I feel more sense of worth and enjoy having a purpose..." "I was engrossed in my own negative feelings but since the letters my spirits have lifted."
Supporting Shrewsbury Residents To Live Active And Healthy Lives Through The Provision Of Quality Services	yes	-78% Letterbox clients state they are more likely to access other services or support. This typically means tackling medical issues before they become emergencies, or partaking in new activities – often physical – if they can manage them. Research shows that increased wellbeing is a predictor for higher activity levels. "...inspired me to do some new things."

Preserving Shrewsbury's Heritage	no	
Creating A Greener And Better-connected Shrewsbury	no	
Maintaining A Sustainable, Resilient And Efficient Organisation	no	
Taking Positive Action To Tackle Climate Change	no	

Q9 What criteria will be used to measure the success of the project and how many people from the Parish of Shrewsbury do you expect to benefit from it?

Our 2026 goal is to improve the mental wellbeing of at least 50 Shrewsbury adults experiencing profound loneliness, with a similar number of new volunteers. We already have about 268 Shrewsbury school children engaged with and benefitting from our programme. From each school we sign up for Pupil Pals, an average of 56 pupils work with us to make their art, while being introduced to topics relating to mental health. We plan to sign up at least one more Shrewsbury school to this programme.

We want clients to feel less lonely, more confident, and better able to cope with life's challenges. Monitoring is built into our processes, through regular client surveys, WEMWBS wellbeing scoring (we see an average increase of 5 points) and volunteer feedback. We also want to raise awareness of the impacts of loneliness, build referrer numbers and grow links with our local community of Shrewsbury. We put great value on testimonials from clients, volunteers, teachers and students.

Health & Safety

Q10 What, if any, special safety issues are related to your project/activity?

Please provide the following information:

- i. What kind of insurance does your organisation have?

Professional liability insurance for not for profits

- ii. Do the leaders have the relevant qualifications and/or experience?

We are overseen by a strong board of Trustees, with diverse professional experience in areas including healthcare, humanitarian aid, education, caring, HR, teaching,

bereavement counselling, nursing, consultancy, volunteering, mental health advocacy and finance. Several of them have a background of business ownership and management.

All staff and Trustees are safeguarding trained and staff are DBS checked.

- iii. What policies does your organisation have in place (i.e. Health and Safety, Child Protection/Safeguarding, working with vulnerable adults, Equal Opportunities, CRB Checks etc.)? *You may be required to submit copies of your policies.*

Anti bribery, Child protection, communications, complaints & compliments, conflict of interest, data protection, equal opportunities, grievance, health & safety, lone working, modern slavery, privacy, safeguarding adults at risk, security, volunteer and whistleblowing policies

Funding of your project

Q11 Previous Applications

If you have applied for and received funding from Shrewsbury Town Council in the past please provide details of the amount, the year and briefly what the funding was used for.

Year	Project Description	Award £
2020	Chatterbox (Coronavirus Battle Fund)	500

Q12 Project Funding

Please provide details of the amount of funding you need for your project and give us a breakdown of what the money is for (please enclose any relevant estimates or details).

Tell us the amount of grant requested: £3,000 and provide a detailed breakdown as to how you have reached this figure

Project Expenditure Please list all items of expenditure for your project	Amount of Project
Proportion of Letterbox related salary costs (half day every week)	£8,515
Postage costs (600 pieces of post x 84p second class franked post)	£504
Total	£9,019
Project Income Please list how the project shall be funded	
Other grant income, including project specific grants and a proportion of core grants	£6,019
What is the difference? This should be the same as the amount of Grant you are applying for	£3,000

Q13 Covering a Shortfall

If the Town Council makes an offer less than the amount requested, how will that impact on the Project and how will you cover the shortfall?

Our funding for Pupil Pals is part of our overall Letterbox programme funding. The more funding we can raise for our Pupil Pals and Letterbox programme, the greater the number of clients we will be able to support. A smaller grant from the Town Council will still be greatly appreciated and will allow us to reach additional schools and clients, that we would not otherwise have been able to support.

We have secured a multi-year, unrestricted grant from The Henry Smith Charity, as well as a number of other, smaller grants for this financial year. Funding from the Town Council would

allow us to grow our existing programme to involve more Shrewsbury schools and reach more lonely people.

Q14 Sustainability

What plans do you have in place to ensure that your organisation becomes more sustainable and less reliant on grant funding, particularly from the Town Council?

We fundraise on an ongoing basis, approaching grant giving trusts of all sizes. We prioritise large, multi-year donations to become increasingly sustainable, meaning we rely less on constantly applying for smaller grants.

We also raise a proportion of our income through individual donations and occasional events. As our profile increases in Shrewsbury, we plan to increase our community fundraising event lineup, becoming a better recognised institution within the town. Finally, we have had a small amount of statutory funding to supplement our fundraising.

Your Accounts

Q15 Please provide the following details from your most recent annual accounts

Total Income	£321,884
Less Total Expenditure	£230,448
Surplus / Loss	£91,436
Savings (Reserves, Cash, Investments)	£179,113

Please provide a copy of your most recent annual audited accounts or, in the case of newly established organisations, the projected income and expenditure for the next twelve months.

You need to include these documents with this application.

Account Details

Q16 Please provide your bank or building society account details

You can only apply for grant if you have a bank/building society account in the name of your organisation. We will only pay grants into an account which requires at least two people to sign each cheque or withdrawal. **These people should not be related.**

Account name:

Sort Code: Account Number:

Bank/building society name:

Bank/building society address: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Who are the signatories and what position do they hold in your organisation?

1 Name: [REDACTED] Position: Chair of Trustees

2 Name: [REDACTED] Position: Finance Officer

Any Other Information

Q17 Any other information which you consider to be relevant to your application.

Our beneficiaries speak for themselves:

"I can't thank Omega enough for such service."

"the birthday card lifted my spirits yesterday. Thank you very much. All these things help when you're not well."

"I do enjoy receiving their letters cards and pictures. They make me feel happy and thank you for sending them to me."

"it has cheered me up and a much-needed distraction."

"I think you do amazing work breaking loneliness."

"I want to thank you all as it has been really helpful for me"

"it's really made me smile and I wanted to pass on the smile!...it's made my day"

"Thank you for my birthday card it really brightened my day."

"lovely Birthday card and wishes. Very much appreciated."

"I really appreciate the beautiful picture hand-made by the local school children. It made my day! Thank you for all that you do. With gratitude"

"I especially liked the spelling mistakes and the fact that it was written in pencil. It made my day"

"I wanted to say thank you so much for my latest Pupil Pals picture. It did put a smile on my face"

"thank you for my birthday card and for the latest letter from my Pupil Pal writer. Both are lovely and very much appreciated"

We work with several carehomes:

"delighted to have received his Pupil Pals letter. It made his day."

“She really appreciates the pictures and the notes that she has from school children...such a great service.”

Teachers and pupils find value in the lessons Pupil Pals teach:

“We are very pleased that we could make a contribution towards the project and we hope the cards make the recipients smile. “

“We have enjoyed being part of this project and will encourage our children to make more cards in the autumn term. Thank you, a lovely idea.”

Declarations

Q18 Declaration

Please give details of a senior member of your organisation.

For example, this may be your Chairperson, Treasurer or Secretary. They must read the application and sign below. **(This must not be the main contact name in Q1).**

I confirm, on behalf of Omega – Ending Isolation, Ending Loneliness (insert name of organisation):

That I am authorised to sign this declaration on its behalf, and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, all replies are true and accurate.

I confirm that I have read the Terms and Conditions set out in the Notes which accompanied this application and further confirm that this application is made on the basis that if successful, the organisation will be bound to use the grant only for the purpose specified in this application, and will have to comply with those Terms and Conditions and any others which the Council might attach to the Grant.

Post held in organisation: Chair of Trustees Title: First Name: Surname:

Organisation address:

Telephone:

Signed: Date: 3.11.25

Q19 Signature of Person Completing the Application

This must be the signature of the person named in Q1 as the main contact and **not be the same person who has signed in Q18**

I confirm that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, all the information in this application from is true and correct. I understand that you may ask for additional information at any stage of the application process.

Signed:



Date: 3.11.25



Checklist

1. Have you answered every question? ✓
2. Have all signatures been completed? ✓
3. Have you included a copy of your constitution? NB: Omega was created in 2007 but re-branded in 2024. The Memorandum attached is from that re-brand. ✓
4. Have you included a copy of your most recent audited accounts? ✓
5. Please state any supporting documents you are submitting: Omega leaflet ✓

Please return your completed application form to:

**Town Clerk
Shrewsbury Town Council
Livesey House
7 St John's Hill
Shrewsbury
SY1 1JD**

Telephone: 01743 281010
Email: Helen.ball@shrewsburytowncouncil.gov.uk