

**\*PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT**

**AGENDA ITEM No.**

**7**

**TITLE OF REPORT: CHAMPION NEWS & FINANCE REPORT**

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF POLICY AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

**1. SUMMARY**

- 1.1 To advise the Committee of the activities and schemes with which the Community Development Officer has been involved.
- 1.2 To bring to the Committee's attention some important community based activities that will be taking place during the next few months.
- 1.3 To bring to the Committee's attention details of recent requests received for Area Committee Development Discretionary Grant Funding made by community groups and local organisations.
- 1.4 To advise the Committee on the current expenditure and balances of the Area Committee delegated budgets.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to note the activities and schemes with which the Community Development Officer has been involved.
- 2.2 The Committee is asked to note the budgetary expenditure, balances and carry forwards within the Area Committee Development Budget Spreadsheet attached as Appendix 1.
- 2.3 That the Committee considers a funding award of £600 to Lilley Parish Council to help support the provision of new 9 'a' side Football Goalposts located at the recreation ground as detailed in 8.2 of this report and Appendix 3 and 8.1 of this report.
- 2.4 That the Committee considers a funding award of £1,500 to Ickleford Preschool for the planned improvements and provision within the 2 year olds room. See Appendix 4 and 8.2 of this report.
- 2.5 That the Committee considers a funding award of £600 to the Pirton Village Hall Cinema Project. See Appendix 5 and 8.3 of this report.
- 2.6 That the Committee considers a funding award of £641 to the Kimpton Bowls Club for equipment for Junior Players. See Appendix 6 and 8.4 of this report.
- 2.7 That the Committee considers a funding award of £993 to the Whitwell Players for a new Lighting Deck. See Appendix 7 and 8.5 of this report.

- 2.8 That the Committee considers a funding award of £1,500 to Waste Not Want Not for the continued development and coordination of the group's activities at the new site in Knebworth. See Appendix 8 and 8.6 of this report.
- 2.9 That the Committee considers a funding award of £950 to St Pauls Walden Parish Council for provision of a Community Gazebo. See Appendix 9 and 8.7 of this report.
- 2.10 That the Committee considers a funding award of £1,000 to St Ippolyts United in the development of a new senior team from the village. See Appendix 10 and 8.8 of this report.
- 2.11 That the Committee considers a funding award of £1,500 to Offley Cricket Club for assistance with repair works to the Club's Pavilion and store. See Appendix 11 and 8.9 of this report.
- 2.12 That the Committee considers a funding award of £950 to Offley Recreation Centre for assistance with external works to the building. See Appendix 12 and 8.10 of this report.
- 2.13 That the Committee considers awarding support funding in relation to any potential Highways schemes as proposed and discussed under section 8.12 of this report.

### **3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 To ensure that the Committee are kept informed of the work of the Community Development Officer.
- 3.2 This report is intended to inform Members of the financial resources available to the Committee. It draws attention to the current budgetary situation, assists in the effective financial management of the Area Committee's budget and ensures actions are performed within the Authority's Financial Regulations and the guidance in the Grants procedure.
- 3.3 The awarding of financial assistance to voluntary organisations and the use of discretionary spending allows the Committee to further the aims and Priorities of the Council.
- 3.4 Production of this report is a requirement of the 'Priorities for the District' in which the Community Development Officer is required to produce a formal report to the Area Committee in line with the Civic Calendar.

### **4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 4.1 There are no alternative options being proposed other than those detailed within the text of this report. However in the course of debate at committee, Members may wish to comment and offer additional views on any of the items raised within this report.

### **5. CONSULTATION WITH EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS AND WARD MEMBERS**

- 5.1 Consultation with Members has occurred in connection with the allocation of funds for Community Projects.
- 5.2 Consultation with the respective officers and external agencies / groups has taken place with regard to the funding proposals for Area Committee Discretionary Development Funds.

## **6. FORWARD PLAN**

- 6.1 This report does not contain a recommendation on a key decision and has not been referred to in the Forward Plan.

## **7. BACKGROUND**

- 7.1 Members are asked to note the information detailed in Appendix 1 Area Committee Budget Spreadsheet, which relates to the Area Committee budget balances for the current financial year 2013/14
- 7.2 The spreadsheet also details pre-allocated sums carried forward from the previous financial year 2012/13 including balances and past expenditure relating to the allocated and un-allocated budgets available to the Committee.
- 7.3 The current level of unallocated funds within the Committee's Development Budget is **£13,550**
- 7.4 The current level of unallocated funds within the Committee's former MoU Budget is **£5,370**
- 7.5 The current level of unallocated funds within the Committee's Ward Member Budgets is **£2,071**
- 7.6 This report has been produced to keep Members informed of the work of the Community Development Officer for the Southern Rural Area.

## **8. PROJECT/ACTIVITY/SCHEME DETAILS**

### **8.1 Lilley Parish Council – Provision of 9 'a' side Football Goalposts**

Lilley Parish Council is aiming to encourage further sporting activities on and around the Parish Recreation Ground with football being one of the main sports under consideration.

Proposals have been drawn up to encourage younger and more senior members of the village and surrounding area to look at re-forming a Lilley Football Team / Club.

The Parish is seeking financial support from the Area Grants Budget available to the Committee in order to assist in the purchase of a pair of Nine 'a' side Football Goalposts and nets, of a type which would be totally secure with a locked crossbar.

The Parish's overall aim is to promote health and welling activities locally within the village and it feels that this initiative would be a good example to kick things off.

The quoted cost of the Goals is £988 and the Parish has indicated that it would cover the £220 installation costs from its own budget, if the Members were minded to make an award for the provision of the goalposts & nets.

## 8.2 **Ickleford Preschool – Improvements to the room for 2 year olds**

Ickleford Preschool is a constituted playgroup which provides services to the community from the Village Hall. The atmosphere at the preschool is lively and busy with numerous activities for the children to do and try out.

The preschool operates two separate rooms, one for 2 years olds and one for 3 to 4 year olds. Average daily numbers attended are 24, 2 year olds and 30, 3 to 4 years olds, with an ever growing waiting list.

The group provides a service to the local community, at a reasonable cost, which is of immense value to parents within the village and surrounding area, who for example wish to return to work or attend training courses.

The Preschool is a member of the Preschool Learning Alliance, a national charitable organisation which supports voluntary sector providers of quality affordable childcare and education in England.

The funding award being sought from the Area Committee is primarily to improve the facilities and activities within the 2 year old room. One of the issues the group needs to address is to temporarily cover the radiators whilst the room is in use as a health and safety precaution.

Additional resources and activity materials are also being sought for use in the 2 years old room, such as a small indoor climbing frame, safety matting, design and drill activity packs, balance bikes, mini micros, galaxy carpet & people rug and free standing pin boards.

The Preschool has various funding projects planned such as a Spring assembly, future quiz night and music event to try and meet some of the costs themselves, although they are asking the Area Committee to consider a grant award of £1,500.

## 8.3 **Pirton Village Hall – Cinema Project**

Last year Pirton Parish Council completed its Parish Plan which involved an extensive community consultation process. One of the resulting priorities identified was the community's desire for the provision of a Community Cinema within the village.

As a result, the Parish Council and The Village Hall have looked at ways of addressing such an initiative and have developed a project and costings around the provision of a projection and sound system of some significance to be installed at the village hall.

Costed equipment to a total of £7,000 includes a retractable screen, blu ray player and a surround sound system. Main beneficiaries are likely to be, Pirton JoyCare, Pirton Players, Village Hall user groups, the creation of film clubs for all ages, Children's parties and those attending other social events held at the hall.

The project team have identified various funding routes to achieve the total sum required and are asking the Area Committee to consider a grant award of £600.

Potential Funding Routes:-

Parish Council	£200
Rural Grant Fund	£2,750
Pirton Players	£200
Pirton Village Hall	£200
Pumpkin Club	£600
s106 / UU funds	£2,491
Total (stc)	<u>£6441</u>

**8.4 Kimpton Bowls Club – Equipment for Junior Players**

Kimpton Bowls Club would like develop an initiative to open up the game of bowls to younger people and a wider section of the community in general. The Club would like to offer Try Out sessions to local youth based organisations and other groups within the village eg. Guides, Brownies, Cubs, Scouts, WI, Tennis Club, Church Groups, Probus etc.

In order to achieve this aim the club wishes to purchase smaller sets of woods and carriers for use by children and young people, plus rink protectors and rubber delivery mats.

The total cost of the equipment is £641 and the club is asking the Area Committee to consider an award in this region.

**8.5 Whitwell Players – Lighting Deck**

The Whitwell Players as a group has been in existence since the early 80's and is an unregistered local club providing amateur dramatics services and productions within the community and primarily staged at the village Hall.

The group has a coordinating committee of 7 with approximately 100+ volunteers involved the group's activities one way or another. The group caters for techies and actors of all ages ranging from 5 to 105yrs. Members come from across the local community with other welcomed from further afield.

The Players put on three to four productions a year including the Xmas Panto which is usually a sell out and involves over 100 members of the local community in some form.

The group is desperately in need of a lighting deck as their old one had become beyond repair and the organisers have been forced to hire one in each time, which severely eats into the group's reserves.

Like other arts and cultural groups within the District, any profits made by the staging of productions are given back to the other local community as donations to help them achieve their own aims and objectives.

This year the group has made donations to Lime Tree House, the Village Hall, Stagenhoe, the local youth club and with other small donations.

The Group is seeking a grant award from the Area Committee in the region of £993 to cover the cost of a new lighting deck in order to continue its invaluable work within the community and raising funds for other local groups through the staging of theatre and drama productions.

## 8.6 **Waste Not Want Not**

The group's new 4 acre new site in Knebworth is far different from previous sites and to develop it into a functioning area and a main base their activities some basic facilities are essentially required in order to support and also sustain the volunteer workers who attend the project.

It is not at all unusual to have between 6 - 10 volunteers on several days a week working on the site, including Sundays. They receive new referrals weekly and their volunteers include ex addicts, people with mental health issues, past offenders, socially excluded and isolated individuals.

They currently have at least 10 volunteers who are CRB checked at enhanced level, but urgently need to have some paid support to help coordinate, train and supervise the volunteers. The group aims to have 1 lead volunteer working with 4 other volunteers for a safe physical and emotional environment for all.

They presently have 3 people who have signed up to do work experience for a total of 75 hours a week for an 8 week period. Their success in such people returning to work or training is really very good but they are hesitant to take more people on if they are unable able to offer the necessary support and supervision.

They understand that many agencies prefer not to fund staffing costs, but they were able to engage someone even for a period of perhaps 8 weeks, to help support and supervise, this could reap enormous benefits.

Essential resources required:-

£250 for steel toe capped boots

£450 for large strengthened marquee

£350 for site portaloo

£220 for pallet of compost to pot on redundant stock given to us by other nurseries

£100 for promotional leaflets

£300 for adverts in the local papers

£300 - £500 for rooted shrubs and perennials to increase the range and quality of the plants they have to offer for sale.

The group asks Members of the Area Committee to perhaps therefore consider a grant award in excess of £1,500 to help develop the site and continue the invaluable support to those volunteers attending the project.

## 8.7 **St Pauls Walden Parish Council – Community Gazebo**

The Parish Council wishes to provide a community resource in the form of a good quality Gazebo that will be made available for use by local groups and organisations at various outdoor calendar events held within the Parish each year eg Parish Day, sporting events and other community days.

The Parish Council will undertake the storing and upkeep of the Gazebo to ensure that it is well maintained, fit to use when let out and returned in good order.

The cost of a middle of the range pop up Gazebo from Gala Shades is £1,350 and the Parish Council is seeking a grant award from the Area Committee in the region of £950 with the balance being drawn from Parish Council funds.

## 8.8 **St Ippolyts United**

There is a move within the Parish to form a new senior Sunday football team for St Ippolyts village. It's being suggested that the team will play in the Hitchin Sunday League in the season 2014/15. The home games will be played at St Ippolyts Recreation Ground and permission for that has been granted by the Parish Council who owns the facility.

The club's aim is to recruit the majority of its players from the immediate local area, with the long term aim of promoting and encouraging the development of junior football in the community.

The organisers have funds available to obtain the actual team football kit, which, together with a change of shirt in the event of colour clashes, will cost around £600.

However, the new club will require funding for the many start up costs associated with the new venture. These costs will include league affiliation fees, membership of both Herts FA and the Football Association. The Club will also need first aid equipment, a spinal board and an emergency defibrillator. From a training and playing aspect they will also need match balls, training balls and equipment, a pitch perimeter rope for use on match days.

A club website and this is currently under development and should be live shortly. This will have information on our officers and committee members, club fixtures and results plus a blog on what is current news.

The organisers of the new club are seeking a grant award from the Area Committee in the region of £1,000 to assist in development of a team and provision of the necessary support infrastructure and equipment.

## 8.9 **Offley Cricket Club – Repair work to the Pavilion & Store Roof**

Offley Cricket Club Pavilion and Store require essential rectification works to the Roof and outer fabric in order to ensure that the building remains water tight and to rule out any further damage resulting from recent weather conditions.

Works Include:-

The removal of the old felt and part board

Replace with a three layer built up system of High performance Green material cap sheet.

Estimated total costs £4,950

The Cricket Club is seeking a grant award from the Area Committee in the region of £1,500 to address these essential works.

**8.10 Offley Recreation Centre – External Works**

Offley Recreation Centre requires essential rectification works to its outer fabric in order to ensure that the building remains water tight and to rule out any further damage resulting from the wet winter months.

Works Include:-

Take Down Old Gutters and Boards

Replace Guttering and fascia Boards

Paint Gutter Boards & put up new Gutters

Repairs on two Skylights

Clear away all Moss and Leaves

Replace Lead Flashing and reset tiles around the Skylights

Estimated total costs including all parts and labour £950

The Centre's Management Committee is seeking a grant award from the Area Committee in the region of £950 to address these essential works

**8.11 UU's / s106 Contributions & Funding Advice**

The CDM is liaising with a number of Parishes re the potential unlocking collected UU (Unilateral Undertakings) contributions held by the Authority and in cases assisting to compile evidence of need within each community re any current and future developments. These are subject to meeting relevant criteria set under regulation and by which the Authority must abide.

**8.12 Highways Matters**

It is proposed that a section entitled 'Highways Matters' is included within the Area Champion's News Report for each committee cycle to facilitate debate and enable appropriate feedback on any of the proposed or listed schemes. This is to ensure that communication remains effective following the demise of the previous Joint Member Panel for each district.

Any new proposals or revised schemes will be forwarded to the respective Herts County Councillor for consideration who will in turn report back and advise the Committee accordingly.

For the longer term, consideration of how proposals are made, handled, prioritised and reported back are included in the scope of a Highways Task and Finish review by NHDC and relevant partners, which took place in late September 2013. The outcomes of that review, and any improvements recommended, will be reported back in due course through the council's committee system, and of course to Area Committees.

**9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 The Terms of Reference in relation to Area Committees confirm that they may establish and maintain relationships with outside bodies/voluntary organisations which includes discretionary grant aid/financial support. However, this does not include grants for district wide activities.

9.2 Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 provides that the Council has power to do anything which it considers likely to promote or improve the economic, social or environmental well-being of its area. This would apply on the basis that financial assistance to voluntary and community organisations improves the economic, social or environmental well-being of the District or part of it.



9.3 Section 137 Local Government Act 1972 provides specific authority for the Council to incur expenditure on anything which is in the interests of and will bring direct benefit to its area. This includes a charity or other body operating for public service.

9.4 The Committee has delegated powers to administer funds from the budgets described.

## **10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

10.1 Members are asked to note the information detailed in Appendix 1 of the report, which relates to the Area Committee budget balances for the current financial year 2012/13.

10.2 The spreadsheet also details the pre-allocations carried forward from the previous financial year 2011/12 to the current financial year 2012/13.

## **11. RISK IMPLICATIONS**

11.1 There are no risk entries that have been recorded on Covalent, the Council's Performance & Risk system. Individual events should have their own risk assessments in place to mitigate any health and safety issues.

## **12. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

12.1 The Equality Act 2010 came into force on the 1<sup>st</sup> October 2010, a major piece of legislation. The Act also created a new Public Sector Equality Duty, which came into force on the 5<sup>th</sup> April 2011. There is a General duty, described in 12.2, that public bodies must meet, underpinned by more specific duties which are designed to help meet them.

12.2 In line with the Public Sector Equality Duty, public bodies must, in the exercise of its functions, give due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

12.3 The projects which comprise the Community Development Officers' workload, and area committee funding assigned to community projects are assessed to ensure that they are as inclusive as possible to members of the local community. The only deviation to this is where a minority group may specifically receive funding or allocation of resources to address a particular area of need or 'gap' in provision.

## **13. SOCIAL VALUE IMPLICATIONS**

13.1 As the recommendations made in this report do not constitute a public service contract, the measurement of 'social value' as required by the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 need not be applied, although equalities implications and opportunities are identified in the relevant section at paragraphs 12.

## **14. HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

14.1 There are no pertinent Human Resource implications associated with any items within this report.

## **15. APPENDICES**

- 15.1 Appendix 1 – Area Committee Development Budget Spreadsheet 2013/14.
- 15.2 Appendix 2 – Area Committee Summary Update 2013/14.
- 15.3 Appendix 3 – Area Committee Grant Form – Lilley Parish Council.
- 15.4 Appendix 4 – Area Committee Grant Form – Ickleford Preschool
- 15.5 Appendix 5 – Area Committee Grant Form – Pirton Village Hall
- 15.6 Appendix 6 – Area Committee Grant Form – Kimpton Bowls Club
- 15.7 Appendix 7 – Area Committee Grant Form – Whitwell Players
- 15.8 Appendix 8 – Area Committee Grant Form – Waste Not Want Not
- 15.9 Appendix 9 – Area Committee Grant Form – St Pauls Walden Parish Council
- 15.10 Appendix 10 – Area Committee Grant Form – St Ippolyts United
- 15.11 Appendix 11 – Area Committee Grant Form – Offley Cricket Club
- 15.12 Appendix 12 – Area Committee Grant Form – Offley Recreation Centre

## **16. CONTACT OFFICERS**

16.1 Author:  
Stuart Izzard Community Development Officer Manager  
Telephone: 01462 474854  
Email: [stuart.izzard@north-herts.gov.uk](mailto:stuart.izzard@north-herts.gov.uk)

16.2 Contributors:  
Shah Mohammed, Assistant Accountant  
Telephone: 01462 474240  
Email: [shah.mohammed@north-herts.gov.uk](mailto:shah.mohammed@north-herts.gov.uk)

Margaret Bracey Community Development Officer – Hitchin  
Telephone: 01462 474830  
Email: [margaret.bracey@north-herts.gov.uk](mailto:margaret.bracey@north-herts.gov.uk)

## **17. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 17.1 Review of Policies and Procedures for Financial Assistance to Voluntary and Community Organisations, November 2002.