

SOUTHERN RURAL COMMITTEE
3 March 2016

***PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT**

AGENDA ITEM No.

8

TITLE OF REPORT: COMMUNITY UPDATE AND GRANT APPLICATIONS

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF POLICY AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: COUNCILLOR TONY HUNTER, COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND RURAL AFFAIRS

1. SUMMARY

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

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to note the budgetary expenditure, balances and carry forwards within the Area Committee Development Budget Spreadsheet attached as Appendix 1.
- 2.2 That the Committee considers a grant award of £500 to Pirton Summer Fair to assist with the provision of children's activities at this year's event, as detailed in Appendix 3 and 8.1 of this report.
- 2.3 That the Committee considers a grant award of £1,000 to Codicote Football Club for the provision of Mobile Pitch Side Shelters, as detailed in Appendix 4 and 8.2 of this report.
- 2.4 That the Committee considers a grant award of £1,500 to Pirton Parish Council to assist in carrying out essential electrical works required to the Sports & Social Club, as detailed in Appendix 5 and 8.3 of this report.
- 2.5 That the Committee considers a grant award of £600 to Codicote Cricket Club to assist with the enhancements to the club's Practice Nets Facility, as detailed in Appendix 6 and 8.4 of this report.

- 2.6 That the Committee considers a Cadwell Ward Grant award of £250 to St Katherine's Church, Ickleford, Room 4 All awareness campaign, as detailed in Appendix 7 and 8.5 of this report.
- 2.7 That the Committee considers a Hitchwood, Offa & Hoo Ward Grant award of £400 for clearance and enhancement works to Preston Village Pond as detailed in Appendix 8 and 8.6 of this report.
- 2.8 That the Committee considers a Codicote Ward Grant award of £200 to Codicote Day Centre to assist with transport costs relating to a summer outing, as detailed in Appendix 9 and 8.7 of this report.
- 2.9 That the Committee considers a Cadwell Ward Grant award of £250 to Ickleford Parish Council for the provision of an additional Dog Waste Bin, as detailed in Appendix 10 and 8.8 of this report.
- 2.10 That the Committee considers a Knebworth Ward Grant award of £700 & a Main Budget Grant award of £300 (£1,000 total) to the Knebworth Football Club for the provision of Mobile Pitch Side Shelters, as detailed in Appendix 11 and 8.9 of this report.
- 2.11 That the Committee considers a Codicote Ward Grant award of £300 to the Codicote Playground Support Group to assist with the planned Open Day of the new children's play area at the Recreation Ground off St Albans Road, as detailed in Appendix 12 and 8.10 of this report.
- 2.12 That the Committee considers a Kimpton Grant award of £350 to the Kimpton Bench Working Party re the installation of a bench at Claggy Road, as detailed in Appendix 13 and 8.11 of this report.
- 2.13 That the Committee considers a Knebworth Grant award of £300 to the Knebworth Twinning Association, as detailed in Appendix 14 and 8.12 of this report.
- 2.14 That the Committee considers a Knebworth Ward Grant award of £250 to the Knebworth Bowls Club to assist with repairs to the perimeter gully, as detailed in Appendix 15 and 8.13 of this report.
- 2.15 That the Committee considers a Hitchwood, Offa & Hoo Grant award of £200 to Lilley Parish Council to assist with costs relating to re planting flower beds around the village War Memorial as detailed in Appendix 16 and 8.14 of this report.
- 2.16 The Committee is asked to note the activities and schemes with which the Community Officer has been involved.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 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 policy.

- 3.2 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.
- 3.3 To ensure that the Committee are kept informed of the work of the Community Officer.

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 within this report.

5. CONSULTATION WITH RELEVANT MEMBERS AND EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS

- 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 2015/16
- 7.2 The spreadsheet also details pre-allocated sums carried forward from the previous financial year 2014/15 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 **£8,821**
- 7.4 The current level of unallocated funds within the Committee's Ward Member Budgets is **£4,500**

8. PROJECT/ACTIVITY/SCHEME DETAILS

- 8.1 **Pirton Summer Fair**
Pirton Summer Fair is an annual event run by Pirton Sports & Social Club. As well as providing a day of activities and entertainment for all the village community, it is also a vital fund raising event to help the Sports & Social club put on other events & activities throughout the year.

It also supports other village groups by providing them with a fund raising opportunity and generally assisting them in raising awareness on how each group support rural community life.

Last year was the first time the Summer Fair applied for grant funding via the Area Committee (£500) which enabled them to provide a number of free activities for the local children attending. This was much appreciated by all and the organisers received a great deal of positive feedback from the community, with many saying it was the best summer fair the village had hosted.

The coordinators would like to build on the success of 2015 and hope to provide further free attractions at this year's event. It was clear from last year that if the children were kept entertained, then their parents and visiting adults were more likely to stay longer, thus making it not only an inclusive event which helped to build and reinforce community cohesion & bonds, but also clearly helped to raise vital funds for local groups / societies and the Sports Club.

The group is therefore seeking a grant award of £500 from the Committee's main budget to go towards the provision of a bouncy castle, giant slide and a fairground ride. All these would be free of charge to participants. The total cost of these is around £750, the balance will be covered by alternative sponsorship.

The group is very grateful to Members of the Committee in their support in the past and hope they will be able to support the event again this year.

8.2 Codicote Football Club – Mobile Pitch Side Shelters

Further to the major football infrastructure enhancements planned at the Bury Lane Recreation Ground, (new stand & floodlights) the club is also looking to fund the provision of two mobile pitch side mobile shelters (a prerequisite by the FA) to accommodate eight people, squad members & coaches for use at the site for all home matches.

At the moment, many games have to be played elsewhere as site doesn't satisfy FA criteria. Prior to the other enhancements taking place, provision of the shelters will enable additional games to be played at the ground.

Total costs for two shelters are quoted at £3,552 and the club hopes to meet the funding gap via its own reserves and other fund raising locally.

Club is asking Members' of the Committee to consider a grant contribution from the Committee's main budget in the region of £1,000.

8.3 Pirton Parish Council - Electrical Works to Sports & Social Club

Pirton Parish Council is looking to undertake essential electrical works within the Sports & Social Club building prior to summer

Works include a variety of electrical improvements and safety works totalling £3,239 ex VAT.

The Parish Council is seeking funding support from the Area Committee's main budget in the region of £2,000 and hopes to meet the funding gap via its own reserves and other fund raising locally.

The Area Committee may wish to note that the Parish Council is a precepting body which has the power to raise funds for such projects in its own right.

8.4 Codicote Cricket Club – Enhancements to the Practice Nets Facility

The Cricket Club is looking to refurbish its practice net facility prior to the start of this year's cricketing season.

The current facility's netting is extremely old and the playing surface matting is worn out in patches. The facility is used extensively on match days and increasingly during the spring and summer weeks for training and coaching sessions for all teams within the club.

The club is planning to under take the works mid March and is seeking funding support from the Area Committee's main budget in the region of £600 with total estimated cost for all the works quoted coming in at £1,400. The club hopes to meet the funding gap via its own reserves and other fund raising locally.

8.5 St Katherine's Church, Ickleford – Room 4 All – Ward Grant

The Friends of St Katherine's Room for All project group, is seeking financial assistance in the region of £250 from the Cadwell Ward Budget to help with costs relating to the printing of materials in order to help raise awareness and ultimately funds for the provision of a Community Room to be built along the side of the Church.

Total printing costs £570 with the group to secure the remaining funds via other local fundraising initiatives.

8.6 Preston Village Pond – Ward Grant

Preston Parish Council is seeking financial assistance in the region of £400 from the Hitchwood, Offa & Hoo Ward Budget to help with costs relating to the village pond. Substantial work is required to unblock the inlet and outlet to the pond in order to minimise the risk of pond water flooding the road during heavy down pours. Other works include the removal of floating vegetation, relocating shrubs & plants from the roadside bank onto the opposite bank, tidy up all other plants and the removal of rubbish.

The village pond is in a central location and enhances the local rural environment and encourages people to enjoy the countryside which has a positive effect on health and well-being. It is important that it is maintained to a high standard to support bird, insect and pond life and it is often used as an additional educational resource for local children.

The Area Committee may wish to note that the Parish Council is a precepting body which has the power to raise funds for such projects in its own right.

8.7 Codicote Day Centre – Ward Grant

Coordinators of the Codicote Day Centre are seeking financial assistance in the region of £200 from the Codicote Ward Budget to help with costs relating to the provision of a summer trip & cruise to the river Lee for centre members.

The centre's main services are run under the umbrella of AGEUK, but there are limited funds to enable the group to have or do anything extra above a normal day at the Poynders Meadow centre.

To give members a more enjoyable time by organising trips out or bringing in entertainers the volunteer coordinators have to raise additional funds locally each year.

The centre was able to organise a trip on the river Lee in 2014 with money from Codicote Parish Council and they would like to repeat a similar outing again this year and would very much appreciate the Area Committee's help financially via a grant award of £200, primarily to cover the cost of a coach.

8.8 Ickleford Parish Council – Additional Dog Waste Bin – Ward Grant

Ickleford Parish Council is seeking financial assistance in the region of £250 from the Cadwell Ward Budget to help with costs relating to the provision of a dog waste bin to be positioned at the top of Muggs Lane, opposite the Church at the junction with the Arlesey Road.

The breakdown of the cost is £219.85 to purchase the bin and £33.60 for installation. Once installed, the Parish Council will cover all other costs re emptying & cleaning etc.

The Area Committee may wish to note that the Parish Council is a precepting body which has the power to raise funds for such projects in its own right.

8.9 Knebworth Football Club – Mobile Pitch Side Shelters – Ward Grant

The Knebworth Football club is also looking to fund the provision of two mobile pitch side shelters a prerequisite eligibility criterion by the FA for promotion to Herts County League premier division.

The units will accommodate up to eight people, squad members & coaches for use at the site for all home matches.

Total costs for two shelters are quoted at £4,752 and the club hopes to meet the funding gap via its own reserves and grant applications to other funding agencies ie Luton Airport Community Trust and the Football Foundation.

Club is asking Members' of the Committee to consider a grant contribution in the region of £1,000 (£700 from the Knebworth Ward Budget and £300 from the Committee's main Grant budget.

8.10 Codicote Playground Support Group – Ward Grant

The Codicote Playground Support Group is seeking financial assistance in the region of £300 from the Codicote Ward Budget to help with costs relating to the staging of a Family Fun Day / fundraising event on Saturday 21st May from 11.00am to 2.00pm to formally celebrate to opening of the new children's Play Area in the main recreation ground just off St Albans Road.

The Communities team have been assisting the group and the Parish Council in securing the funding (in excess of £50k) to undertake the redevelopment works, whilst consulting with the community at various stages over the past couple of years

The group is planning to have a few stalls, re cakes & tombola & food etc and probably a BBQ. They are also planning some form of activities & entertainment on the day, although they are keeping their plans fairly realistic in case of inclement weather.

8.11 Kimpton Bench Working Party – Ward Grant

The Bench Working Party recently carried out a significant clear up of an overgrown verge in Claggy Road, at and near the junction with Lawn Avenue - clearing vegetation, & cutting back trees.

The party installed a new Notice Board, and with assistance from a BT engineer washed out the phone box and got the phone working too.

In the process they found a concrete platform which had clearly been a base for a bench in the past but had become covered in grass growth.

This area of the village does not get a great deal of attention and just up from the phone box are the Claggy Road older people's bungalows, There are older folk living in Lawn Avenue and Commons Lane, so the Bench Working Party a new bench might well be called for.

The Party propose a bench made from re-cycled plastic bags, which would be maintenance free and almost vandal proof. The bench that the Party has in mind would cost around £370 including delivery. The BWP would install the bench and find an appropriate way of securing it to the concrete pad.

The Bench Working Party is therefore seeking a grant award in the region of £350 from the Kimpton Ward Budget.

The Area Committee may wish to note that if approved the Ward Grant funds will be released to the Parish Council to order the bench & associated materials. As in other applications the Parish is a precepting body which has the power to raise funds for such projects in its own right.

8.12 Knebworth Twinning Association – Ward Grant

Knebworth Twinning Association is seeking financial assistance in the region of £300 from the Knebworth Ward Budget to help with costs relating to group's annual premium for liability insurance, which covers all the association's events & functions.

8.13 Knebworth Bowls Club – Ward Grant

The Bowls Club is looking to address a number of sunken areas within the perimeter gully surrounding the main playing green.

Materials required to undertake the works have been estimated at around £500 and Club Members are looking to do most of the works themselves in order to keep overall costs down and their plan is to start the works prior to the beginning of this year's playing season.

The club manages to operate on a small working balance within the Club's accounts each year and has to reserve funds to cover external contractor costs associated in keeping the green in good order with further funds put aside to maintain the grass cutting mowers.

The Bowls Club is therefore seeking a grant award in the region of £250 from the Knebworth Ward Budget.

8.14 Planting scheme around War Memorial at Lilley – Ward Grant

Lilley Parish Council is seeking financial assistance in the region of £200 from the Hitchwood, Offa & Hoo Ward Budget to help with costs relating to the replanting of beds around the village War Memorial.

The Area Committee may wish to note that the Parish Council is a precepting body which has the power to raise funds for such projects in its own right.

8.15 **Highways Matters**

This section is included within the community update report for each committee cycle to facilitate debate and enable appropriate feedback on any of the proposed or listed Highways related schemes.

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.

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

The CM is liaising with a number of Parishes re the potential unlocking of 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.

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 include discretionary grant aid/financial support but excluding grants for district-wide activities. The Committee has delegated powers, as a body, to allocate discretionary budgets and devolved budgets within the terms determined by the Council.

9.2 Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 provides a General Power of Competence which gives local authorities the power to do anything that individuals generally may do. This may be for, or otherwise than for the benefit of the authority, its area or persons resident in its area.

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 **as a body** has delegated powers to administer funds from the budgets described. Whilst individual ward members may comment on and support (or not) any grant application put before the committee, the decision to award is afforded only to the Southern Rural Area Committee itself under the Council's Constitution and provided such committee is quorate at the time of such decision.

10. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

10.1 In the past few years there has been no inflationary allowance to the main Area Committee Budget and the 2015/16 baseline budget has stayed the same as the previous year.

10.2 Appendix 1 provides details of the 2015/16 budget position for the Area Committee.

11. **RISK IMPLICATIONS**

11.1 There are no relevant 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. There are no pertinent risk implications for the Authority associated with any items within this report.

12. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1 The Equality Act 2010 came into force on the 1st October 2010, a major piece of legislation. The Act also created a new Public Sector Equality Duty, which came into force on the 5th 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 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 2015/16.
- 15.2 Appendix 2 – Area Committee Summary Update 2015/16.
- 15.3 Appendix 3 – Grant Form – Pirton Summer Fair
- 15.4 Appendix 4 – Grant Form – Codicote Football Club – Mobile Pitch Side Shelters
- 15.5 Appendix 5 – Grant Form – Pirton PC - Electrical Works to Sports & Social Club
- 15.6 Appendix 6 – Grant Form – Codicote CC – Enhancements to the Practice Nets Facility
- 15.7 Appendix 7 – Ward Grant Form – St Katherine's Church, Ickleford – Room 4 All
- 15.8 Appendix 8 – Ward Grant Form – Preston Village Pond
- 15.9 Appendix 9 – Ward Grant Form – Codicote Day Centre

- 15.10 Appendix 10 – Ward Grant Form – Ickleford PC – Additional Dog Waste Bin
- 15.11 Appendix 11 – Ward Grant Form – Knebworth FC – Mobile Pitch Side Shelters
- 15.12 Appendix 12 – Ward Grant Form – Codicote Playground Support Group – Open Day
- 15.13 Appendix 13 – Ward Grant Form – Kimpton Bench Working Party – Claggy Road
- 15.14 Appendix 14 – Ward Grant Form – Knebworth Twinning Association
- 15.15 Appendix 15 – Ward Grant Form – Knebworth Bowls Club – Ground Repairs
- 15.16 Appendix 16 – Ward Grant Form – Lilley PC – War Memorial Planting Scheme

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17. BACKGROUND PAPERS

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