

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL



17 February 2023

Our Ref Southern Rural Committee/2 March 2023
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To: Members of the Committee: Councillors George Davies (Chair), Mandi Tandi (Vice-Chair), David Barnard, Faye S Frost, Ian Moody, Ralph Muncer, Lisa Nash, Sam North, Claire Strong and Terry Tyler

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN OF A

MEETING OF THE SOUTHERN RURAL COMMITTEE

to be held in the

**COUNCIL CHAMBERS, DISTRICT COUNCIL OFFICES,
GERNON ROAD, LETCHWORTH GARDEN CITY, SG6 3JF**

On

THURSDAY, 2ND MARCH, 2023 AT 7.30 PM

Yours sincerely,

Jeanette Thompson
Service Director – Legal and Community

****MEMBERS PLEASE ENSURE THAT YOU DOWNLOAD ALL AGENDAS AND REPORTS VIA THE MOD.GOV APPLICATION ON YOUR TABLET BEFORE ATTENDING THE MEETING****

Agenda Part I

Item	Page
1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE	
2. MINUTES - 20 DECEMBER 2022 To take as read and approve as a true record the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on the 20 December 2022.	(Pages 5 - 8)
3. NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS Members should notify the Chair of other business which they wish to be discussed at the end of either Part I or Part II business set out in the agenda. They must state the circumstances which they consider justify the business being considered as a matter of urgency. The Chair will decide whether any item(s) raised will be considered.	
4. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS Members are reminded that any declarations of interest in respect of any business set out in the agenda, should be declared as either a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest or Declarable Interest and are required to notify the Chair of the nature of any interest declared at the commencement of the relevant item on the agenda. Members declaring a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest must withdraw from the meeting for the duration of the item. Members declaring a Declarable Interest, wishing to exercise a 'Councillor Speaking Right', must declare this at the same time as the interest, move to the public area before speaking to the item and then must leave the room before the debate and vote.	
5. HERTFORDSHIRE CONSTABULARY - UPDATE To receive a verbal update from Hertfordshire Constabulary on their work in the Southern Rural area.	
6. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION To receive petitions, comments and questions from the public.	
7. GRANT APPLICATIONS AND COMMUNITY UPDATE To provide the Committee with an update to ensure Members are kept informed of the work of the Community Engagement Team.	(Pages 9 - 18)
8. WARD MATTERS AND OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS - MEMBERS' REPORTS To receive any verbal reports from Members regarding Ward matters and Outside Organisations.	

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Public Document Pack Agenda Item 2

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

SOUTHERN RURAL COMMITTEE

MEETING HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, DISTRICT COUNCIL OFFICES, GERONON ROAD, LETCHWORTH
ON TUESDAY, 20TH DECEMBER, 2022 AT 7.30 PM

MINUTES

Present: *Councillors: Councillor George Davies (Chair), Councillor Mandi Tandi (Vice-Chair), Ian Moody, Ralph Muncer and Claire Strong*

In Attendance:

Claire Morgan (Community Engagement Team Leader) Louis Mutter (Committee, Member and Scrutiny Officer) and Aimee Flack (Assistant Community Engagement Officer)

Also Present:

At the commencement of the meeting approximately 1 member of the public, including registered speakers.

112 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Audio recording – 1 minute 14 seconds

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors David Barnard, Faye Forst, Sam North, Lisa Nash and Terry Tyler.

113 MINUTES - 29 SEPTEMBER 2022

Audio Recording – 1 minute 30 seconds

Councillor George Davies proposed and Councillor Ian Moody seconded and following a vote it was:

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 29 September 2022 be approved as a true record of the proceedings and be signed by the Chair.

114 NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS

Audio recording – 2 minutes 13 seconds

There was no other business notified.

115 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Audio recording – 2 minutes 20 seconds

- (1) The Chair welcomed those present at the meeting, especially those who had attended to give a presentation;
- (2) The Chair advised that, in accordance with Council Policy, the meeting would be audio recorded;

- (3) The Chair drew attention to the item on the agenda front pages regarding Declarations of Interest and reminded Members that, in line with the Code of Conduct, any Declarations of Interest needed to be declared immediately prior to the item in question.
- (4) Members were reminded the make declarations of interest before an item, a detailed reminder about this and speaking rights are set out under Chair's Announcements on the agenda.
- (5) North Herts recently acquired the lease for the Churchgate Shopping Centre in Hitchin. Ahead of drawing up proposals for the site, North Herts Council is inviting the community to take part in an initial consultation to get their views on what they would like to see in the Centre.

The consultation will be available online and there will be a promotion on social media channels and on flyers around the district. The consultation will open on 5 December 2022 and will run until 5 February 2023.

- (6) The Chair bid farewell to Louis Mutter, Committee, Member and Scrutiny Officer who was clerking his final meeting before moving to Hertfordshire County Council.

116 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Audio recording – 3 minutes 20 seconds

There was no public participation at this meeting.

117 CITIZENS ADVICE - RURAL ENGAGEMENT OFFICER INTRODUCTION

The Chair invited Ms. Christine Adams to address the Committee.

Ms. Christine Adams of the North Herts Citizen Advice Bureau thanked the Chair for the opportunity to speak and introduced herself as the new Rural Engagement Officer. Ms. Adams then updated the committee on the work of the North Herts Citizens Advice Bureau and raised the following key points:

- Ms. Adams has been asked to promote the work of the Citizens Advice Bureau to the rural residents of North Hertfordshire;
- Have a presence in Letchworth Town Centre; unfortunately the Hitchin office recently closed;
- The operation of the Citizens Advice Bureau has changed since the pandemic, operating on more of an appointment basis rather than a drop-in basis;
- CAB would like to see more rural residents getting in contact;
- Ms. Adams wanted members of the Committee to be aware that CAB are here to help; they are happy to attend rural events and want to get involved in the village communities;
- CAB is recruiting local volunteers; a lady from Offley has very kindly offered to work 4 hours a week to provide support.

The following Members asked questions:

- Councillor Ralph Muncer
- Councillor Mandi Tandi

In response to questions Ms. Christine Adams advised:

- Ms. Adams was due to be in Kimpton for a meeting this evening but attending the Area Committee clashed; happy to attend further Kimpton pop-up events;

- Councillors can provide support to residents by signposting them in the direction of the Citizens Advice Bureau.

The Chair thanked Ms. Christine Adams for attending and addressing the Committee.

118 GRANTS AND COMMUNITY UPDATE

Audio Recording – 10 minutes 50 seconds

The Assistant Community Engagement Officer presented the report entitled Grants & Community Update and highlighted the following key points:

- The 2022/23 base budget was £8,700 with a £222 carry forward from the previous year; £3,306 has already been awarded to grants which leaves a budget of £5,616;
- No grants to consider at this meeting, the deadline for the next meeting is the 6th January;
- The Outlook Magazine provides an update from 2 of the previous successful grant applicants from this Committee;
- The Community Engagement Team have been collecting information on 'Warm Hubs' being set up in the district – more information will be provided on the North Herts website;
- The Council's Walking & Cycling Infrastructure Plan consultation has now ended and the Transport Team are working with Hertfordshire County Council to utilise the results;
- The Youth Democracy Event was well received by the schools, with 3 school visits in the Southern Rural area;
- The Community Engagement Team are currently organising a Holocaust Memorial Day which will take place in the Council Chamber on 27 January at 10:30am;
- North Herts Heroes just started taking nominations, deadline is 8 January.

The following Members asked questions:

- Councillor Claire Strong

In response to questions the Assistant Community Engagement Officer and the Community Engagement Team Leader advised:

- The Community Engagement Team have the ability to make delegated decisions if grant applications for future events miss the deadline; especially with the deadline so close after Christmas. It would be advised that organisations express their interest in grants as early as possible and can work out the finer details closer to the time.

119 WARD MATTERS AND OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS - MEMBERS' REPORTS

Audio recording – 20 minutes 50 seconds

Councillor Ralph Muncer made the Committee aware of a public consultation based on the possibility of lowering the speed limit in Kimpton. This is available to respond to on the Hertfordshire County Council website.

Councillor Claire Strong informed the Committee that the Holwell Cricket pavilion was close to opening and that Pirton are extremely happy they have received £50,000 to help fund their new recreation ground.

120 PARISH FORUM NETWORK

Audio Recording 23 minutes 35 seconds

The Assistant Community Engagement Officer presented an overview of the planned Parish Forum Network and highlighted the following points:

- The Community Engagement Team have various network groups around various themes such as Art & Culture, Food Provision;
- Allows groups to build relationships and share best practices;
- Idea is that Parish Councils can meet and discuss issues they are facing, discuss particular themes;
- First meeting back in December, 4 Parishes attended; the theme was the cost of living;
- Wanted to have a discussion with the committee to get some ideas.

The following Members and officers took part in a discussion:

- Councillor George Davies
- Councillor Ralph Muncer
- Councillor Claire Strong
- Community Engagement Team Leader
- Councillor Ian Moody
- Assistant Community Engagement Officer

The key points raised in the discussion were:

- The Parish Network should not overlap with the work of the Area Committees, should be peer-to-peer, such as sharing best practices on Neighbourhood Plans;
- The Network should not be limited to the Parish Councils in the Southern Rural area, could also incorporate the Parishes in the Baldock & District and Royston & District areas;
- The theme for the December meeting was set beforehand, it linked well with Citizens Advice;
- Parish Council's were invited to attend and join the discussion during this meeting but due to it being close to Christmas there was only 1 Parish which expressed interest in attending;
- Police & Crime discussion topics would be popular with Parishes;
- Parish Chairs & Clerks were contacted about when they would most like to attend the December meeting and most said a weekday morning;
- Possibly moving the Southern Rural Area Committee to Village Halls across the area;
- Forum planned to be meeting twice a year;
- Borrowing heavily from the Rural Conference in order to best organise the Network Forum.

The Assistant Community Engagement Officer thanked the Committee for the suggestions and stated that she would also hear from absent Committee Members for their opinions before testing the feasibility of the Parish Forum Network.

The meeting closed at 8.22 pm

Chair

SOUTHERN RURAL COMMITTEE 2 March 2023

*PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT

TITLE OF REPORT: GRANTS & COMMUNITY UPDATE

REPORT OF: THE POLICY & COMMUNITIES MANAGER

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

CURRENT COUNCIL PRIORITIES: PEOPLE FIRST, SUSTAINABILITY, A BRIGHTER FUTURE TOGETHER

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 To advise the Committee on the current expenditure and balances of the Committee Grant budgets.
- 1.2 To bring to the Committee's attention details of recent requests received for 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 Engagement officers have been involved in.
- 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 That the Committee be recommended to consider allocating funding from their discretionary community budget towards the projects below.
- 2.2 **£2,485** to Breachwood Green JMI School PTFA towards a new spectator rail which will enclose the sports pitch as outlined in 8.1.1-8.1.4.
- 2.3 **£1,500** to Kimpton Folk Events to provide free entertainment at Kimpton Folk Festival on 1st July 2023 8.1.5-8.1.9.
- 2.4 That the Committee be recommended to endorse the actions taken by the Community Engagement team to promote greater community capacity and well-being for Southern Rural.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 To ensure the Committee is kept informed of the work of the Community Engagement Team.
- 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 by assisting in the effective financial management of the Area Committee's budget. This ensures that all actions are performed in line with the Authority's Financial Regulations, the Council's Constitution, and the guidance of the Grants Policy as agreed by Cabinet in July 2021.
- 3.3 The awarding of financial assistance to voluntary organisations and the use of discretionary spending allows the Committee to further the aims of the Council Plan.

4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1. There are no alternative options being proposed other than those detailed within the text of this report. However, during debate at committee, Members may wish to comment and offer additional views on any of the items included 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 bodies/groups has taken place regarding funding proposals for Committee Funds.

6. FORWARD PLAN

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

7. BACKGROUND

- 7.1 With reference to the Council's Constitution, Section 9.3 Area Committees will include budgets for the purpose of providing grants and discretionary budgets that may be used within the area of the Committee for economic, social, and environmental well-being.
- 7.2 Members are asked to note the information detailed in Appendix 1. Southern Rural Area Committee Budget spreadsheet, which relates to the Committee budget balances for 2022/23. The spreadsheet also details pre-allocated sums carried forward from the previous financial year, including balances and past expenditure.

8. RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS

Councillors are at liberty to consider any amount requested in a grant application if the committee has sufficient funds in the 2022/2023 budget.

8.1 Grant Applications

8.1.1

Applicant	Breachwood Green JMI School PTFA
Project	Spectator Rail
Sum requested	£2,485
Total project cost	£24,285 – for overhaul of outside play space
Match funding	£3,000 Funds already raised by PTFA £1,000 Donations from parents Christmas events £15,000 Local Business Grant £2,800 to still raise for whole project phase 1
Previous support	None
NHDC Policy met	Yes
Council objectives	People First A Brighter Future Together

8.1.2 The Breachwood Green JMI School Parent Teacher Friends Association are raising funds to overhaul the outside play space of the school. The project is to remove the existing old climbing apparatus, and install an artificial grass, fenced sports pitch, and then to install new climbing apparatus in the playground area.

8.1.3 This grant would pay for the spectator rail, which will enclose the sports pitch. In the unlikely event the prices increase in the time since the quote was received, the school and PTFA would address any shortfalls through fundraising. This is the most competitive quote, having approached four companies.

8.1.4 The current 85 pupils at the school and future pupils will benefit from the improved facilities for years to come. The children will also be able to play in the new sports pitch in all weathers.

8.1.5

Applicant Project	Kimpton Folk Events Free entertainment at Kimpton Folk Festival on 1 st July 2023
Sum requested	£1,500
Total project cost	£7,450
Match funding	£1,500 Fundraising concerts £250 Charity buckets £200 Programme Ads £1,000 stall rental/concessions £3,000 to still raise - in the process of preparing grant applications to other funding bodies
Previous support NHDC Policy met	£390 in 2019 towards folk festival At the time of writing this report we are awaiting a robust Safeguarding Policy from Kimpton Folk Events. If the Committee approve funding for this grant, it will be conditional of receipt of an adequate policy.
Council objectives	People First A Brighter Future Together

8.1.6 Kimpton Folk Events are raising funds to cover the cost of the free entertainment provided at The Kimpton Folk Festival on 1st July. The festival is planned to start at 11.30am and end at 11pm, comprising of a wide range of top-quality music and other activities.

8.1.7 The festival consists of both ticketed concerts and free events to enable the festival to be accessible to all. They offer free entertainment as part of their commitment to supporting emerging folk musicians and introducing new audiences to live music. The free activities are designed to benefit families and others not wishing, or able, to pay for the ticketed events.

8.1.8 They will include performances by a wide range of folk musicians, both local and from further afield. In the Dacre rooms, they will be providing free music workshops to young and not so young aspiring musicians which will cover a range of instruments and musical topics. Also, folk music sessions and opportunities for 'open mic' performances will be available at 'The Boot'.

8.1.9 Putting on an event of this size and variety in a small village brings together people from across the whole community, with some 60 volunteers helping on the day, in addition to those actively involved with the Charity on an ongoing basis. Visitors are expected from: Kimpton, Codicote, St Paul's Walden, Peters Green, Whitwell, Blackmore End, Gustard Wood, Wheathampstead, Harpenden, St Albans, Luton, Hitchin, Stevenage, Hatfield, Welwyn and Royston, and further afield, through their connections with local folk clubs.

8.2 Community Engagement Update and previous grants awarded

8.2.1 Community Engagement Team

8.2.2 The team have been continuing to engage and network with local community groups and initiatives. This involved:

- Continuing to review and gauge interest in the Parish Forum Network for Parishes.
- The Assistant Community Engagement Officer attended the Codicote Parish Council meeting in January and Wymondley Parish Council meeting in February to highlight the work of the Community Team.
- The team co-ordinated an event for Holocaust Memorial Day which was on 27th January 2023. The recording can be viewed online [North Herts Council marks Holocaust Memorial Day | North Herts Council \(north-herts.gov.uk\)](https://www.north-herts.gov.uk/news/2023/01/27/north-herts-council-marks-holocaust-memorial-day).
- The team are co-ordinating the North Herts Heroes Awards ceremony which will be on 3rd March 2023.
- Co-ordinating various local and district wide Network Groups such as Youth Action, Food Provision, Arts and Culture and Green and Growing Group.
- Continue to facilitate the NHC Councillors' Community Surgeries.
- Continuing to share and disseminate information on social media and to mailing lists, keeping in touch with the community, voluntary, statutory and non-statutory agencies.

8.3 Highways Matters

8.3.1 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.

8.3.2 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.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Sections 9.8.1 (a) and 9.8.1 (b) of the Council's Constitution in respect of the Area Committees' Terms of Reference, notes the following: - To allocate discretionary budgets within the terms determined by the Council and to allocate devolved budgets and activities within the terms determined by the Council. This is outlined in the current Grant

Policy agreed by Cabinet in July 2021. Section 9.8.2 (h) of the Constitution in respect of Area Committees' Terms of Reference notes that they may: - Establish and maintain relationships with outside bodies/voluntary organisations operating specifically with the area including, where appropriate, the provision of discretionary grant aid/financial support etc. but excluding grants for district-wide activities.

- 9.2 Chapter 1, s1-8 of the Localism Act 2011 provides a General Power of Competence which gives local authorities the powers to do anything provided that it is not specifically prohibited in legislation.
- 9.3 Section 137 of the 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.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 As outlined in Appendix 1. Southern Rural Area Committee budget 2022/23.
- 10.2 The 2022/23 base budget was **£8,700**, with **£222** carried forward from the 2021/22 budget. Grants awarded to date total **£3,306** which leaves a budget available of **£5,616**.
- 10.3 The grant applications for this meeting total **£3,985** and if the Members agree the grants outlined in this report this will leave a balance of **£1,631** to carry forward into the 2023/24 budget.

11. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 There are no relevant risk entries that have been recorded on Pentana Risk, the Council's performance and risk system. Individual events should have their own risk assessments in place to mitigate any health and safety issues. Whenever a request for grant funding for equipment is received, the recipient of the funding will be advised to obtain insurance for the item to avoid a repeat request for funding in the event of the equipment being stolen or damaged. There are no pertinent risk implications for the Authority associated with any items within this report.

12. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1. In line with the Public Sector Equality Duty, public bodies must, in the exercise of their 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.
- 12.2. Area committee funding is awarded to community groups that clearly demonstrate positive impact on the community and wider environment. The projects outlined in this report seek to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

13. SOCIAL VALUE IMPLICATIONS

13.1. The Social Value Act and “go local” requirements do not apply to this report.

14. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

14.1 None.

15. HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

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

16. APPENDICES

16.1 Appendix 1 – Appendix 1 Southern Rural Area Committee budget 2022/23

17. CONTACT OFFICERS

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18. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 18.1 Review of Policies and Procedures for Financial Assistance to Voluntary and Community Organisations, November 2002.
- 18.2 Review of Grant Policy, Cabinet July 2021.

SOUTHERN RURAL AREA COMMITTEE BUDGET 2022/23

<u>SUMMARY/ TOTALS</u>	<u>Funding</u>	<u>Allocated</u>	<u>Spent</u>	<u>Outstanding</u>	<u>Unallocated Budget</u>					
CARRY FORWARD BUDGET 2021/22	£222	£222	£222	£0	£0					
BASE BUDGET 2022/23	£8,700	£3,084	£3,084	£0	£5,616					
TOTAL	£8,922	£3,306	£3,306	£0	£5,616					

<u>2020/21</u>	<u>Funding</u>		<u>Project</u>	<u>Allocated</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Spent</u>	<u>Outstanding</u>	<u>Unallocated Amount</u>	<u>Comments</u>
CARRY FORWARD BUDGET 2021/22	£222		Holwell Parish Council - tables & chairs for pavilion	£222	30-Jun-22	£222	£0		Total grant £1,211 - £989 from 2022/23 base budget
	£222			£222		£222	£0	£0	

<u>2021/22</u>	<u>Funding</u>		<u>Project</u>	<u>Allocated</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Spent</u>	<u>Outstanding</u>	<u>Unallocated Amount</u>	<u>Comments</u>
BASE BUDGET 2022/23	£8,700		Holwell Parish Council - tables & chairs for pavilion	£989	30-Jun-22	£989	£0		Total grant £1,211 - £222 from 2021/22 c/fwd budget
			Ickleford Parish Council - conservation activities	£569	30-Jun-22	£569	£0		
			Offley Parish Council - noticeboard	£500	29-Sep-22	£500	£0		
			Kimpton Primary School - painting station	£657	29-Sep-22	£657	£0		
			Breachwood Green Charity Group (CIO) - coffee mornings & litter picking insurance	£369	29-Sep-22	£369	£0		
							£0		
							£0		
	£8,700			£3,084		£3,084	£0	£5,616	

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