

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL



28 May 2025

Our Ref Southern Rural Community Forum
5 June 2025
Contact. Community Partnerships Team
Direct Dial. 01462 474405
Email. community@north-herts.gov.uk

To: Members of the Area Forum: Councillors David Barnard, Joe Graziano, Dominic Griffiths, Caroline McDonnell, Ralph Muncer, Lisa Nash, Steven Patmore, Louise Peace, Vijaiya Poopalasingham, Paul Ward and Laura Williams

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN OF A

MEETING OF THE SOUTHERN RURAL COMMUNITY FORUM

to be held in the

**HYBRID (VIRTUAL / COUNCIL CHAMBERS, COUNCIL
OFFICES, GERNON ROAD, LETCHWORTH GARDEN CITY, SG6
3JF)**

On

THURSDAY, 5TH JUNE, 2025 AT 7.30 PM

Yours sincerely,

Jeanette Thompson
Director – Governance

****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.	ELECTION OF A CHAIR FOR CIVIC YEAR 2025/56	
2.	ELECTION OF A VICE- CHAIR FOR CIVIC YEAR 2025/56	
3.	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE	
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.	PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - GRANT APPLICATIONS To consider community grant applications for recommendation to the Executive Member for Community and Partnerships.	(Pages 3 - 12)
6.	PRESENTATION - BIN COLLECTION: WHAT'S CHANGING Presentation and Q&A from a council representative on the new bin deliveries. Information on the bin collection service changes can be found at Bin collection service changes North Herts Council .	
7.	COMMUNITY UPDATE To provide the Forum with an update to ensure Members are kept informed of the work of the Community Partnerships Team.	(Pages 13 - 14)
8.	WARD MATTERS & OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS To receive any verbal reports from Members and questions from members of the public regarding Ward matters and Outside Organisations	
9.	FUTURE COMMUNITY FORUMS To discuss topics for future meetings.	

REPORT (FOR RECOMMENDATION & NOTING BY COMMUNITY FORUM)

SOUTHERN RURAL COMMUNITY FORUM DATE 5 JUNE 2025

***PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT**

SERVICE DIRECTORATE: GOVERNANCE

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 To advise the Community Forum on the current expenditure and balances of the Community Grant budget.
- 1.2 To bring to the Forum's attention details of recent requests received for Community grant funding, made by community groups and local organisations.
- 1.3 To enable Forum Members to make recommendations to the Executive Member for Community & Partnerships on grant applications.
- 1.4 To advise the Forum of the activities and schemes with which Community & Partnerships officers have been involved in and some important community-based activities that will take place during the next few months.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

THAT THE COMMUNITY FORUM:

- 2.1 Considers and notes the information within this report.
- 2.2 Makes recommendations to the Executive Member for Community & Partnerships on the grant applications detailed below.
- 2.3 Pirton Community Choir - **£1,073** towards the purchase of a piano stool, microphone boom, keyboard in addition to a case and stand.
- 2.4 Whitwell 25 Football Club - **£1,125** towards the hire of the Recreation ground and pavilion.

3. BACKGROUND/ RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1 The Community Grant budget for Southern Rural Community Forum 2025/26 is **£15,000**.
- 3.2 No Community grant payments have been made to date for the financial year 2025/26.

4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Following the decision of Full Council on 18 April 2023, a Community Forum shall consider applications for community grants in its area and make recommendations to the Executive Member for Community & Partnerships on them. The Executive Member has delegated authority to make these Executive decisions under section 14.6.8(b)((ii)A 5 of the constitution, in consultation with the Service Director: Legal & Community. That decision will be subject to a 5 clear working day call-in period,

following publication in the Members Information Service (MIS) and on the Council's website.

- 4.2 Other issues raised in this report are for information and noting and therefore no direct legal implications arise.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 As outlined in Appendix 1 and under item 3.1 the Community Grant budget available is **£15,000**.
- 5.2 The total amount of funding requested for this meeting is **£2,198**.
- 5.3 If the applications outlined in Appendices 2 and 3 are recommended by the Forum and subsequently approved by the Executive Member for Community & Partnerships, there would be **£12,802** available for Community Grants for the remainder of the 2025-2026 financial year.

6. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Good risk management supports and enhances the decision-making process, increasing the likelihood of the Council meeting its objectives and enabling it to respond quickly and effectively to change. When taking decisions, risks and opportunities must be considered.
- 6.2 There are no relevant risk entries that have been recorded on Ideagen Risk Management, 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.

7. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 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.
- 7.2 Community Grant funds are 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.

8. SOCIAL VALUE IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The Social Value Act and "go local" policy do not apply to the matters contained within this report, as there are no recommendations on procurement.

9. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There are no known Environmental impacts or requirements that apply to this report.

10. HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 The activities of the Community & Partnerships team are covered by existing budgets.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

11.1 Terms of Reference for Community Forums, Section 9 of the Council Constitution updated April 2024.

11.2 Community Grants Criteria Policy March 2025.

12. APPENDICES

12.1 Appendix 1. Southern Rural Community Grant Budget 25-26

12.2 Appendix 2. Pirton Community Choir

12.3 Appendix 3. Whitwell 25 FC

12.4 Appendix 4. Community Updates

13. CONTACT OFFICERS

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SOUTHERN RURAL COMMUNITY FORUM

SUMMARY FINANCIAL POSITION 2025/26

<u>Original Budget</u> <u>2025/26</u>	<u>Carry Forward Budget</u> <u>2024/25</u>	<u>Total Funding</u> <u>2025/26</u>	<u>Grants</u> <u>Allocated</u>	<u>Unallocated</u> <u>Budget</u>
£15,000		£15,000	£0	£15,000

FUNDED PROJECTS

<u>Project</u>	<u>Forum Date</u>	<u>Grant Allocated</u>
TOTAL SOUTHERN RURAL COMMUNITY FORUM		£0

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Appendix 2. Pirton Community Choir

=Document Control:

Version	Issue Date	Changes
1.0	NA	First Draft (BE)

Reference	6115			
Name of Organisation	Pirton Community Choir			
Organisation Type	Community Choir			
Ward	Offa			
Project Type	Purchase of musical equipment			
Green option considered?	-			
NHC Councillor involvement that may constitute a conflict of interest	-			
Previous financial support within six years	-			
Documentation reviewed and approved*	Safeguarding	Yes	Accounts	Yes
	Demonstrates clear governance	Yes		
Total applied for	£1,073	Total project cost	£1,323	
Officer Summary				

Pirton Community Choir plays a vital role in fostering connection, creativity, and a shared love of music for residents of Pirton and the surrounding area. The choir provides an inclusive space where residents of all ages and backgrounds can come together, no auditions required, just a passion for singing.

In rural communities such as Pirton and its neighbouring villages, opportunities for frequent social engagement can be limited. Through weekly rehearsals and community performances, the choir creates an inclusive environment where individuals can connect, build relationships, and foster a sense of belonging. This initiative aims to reduce social isolation, particularly among older residents, newcomers, and those who work remotely. In addition to rehearsals, the choir performs at local fairs, church services, and concerts.

Pirton Community Choir are requesting £1,073 to purchase musical equipment, including a keyboard, keyboard case and stand, two microphone booms and a piano stool. These items will be sourced from an independently owned business. The Pirton Pumpkin Club has already contributed £250 toward equipment costs.

The choir will be advertising through their Facebook page and Instagram account. They are currently in the process of developing a dedicated website and are exploring promotion through local radio.

The requested funds will allow the choir to continue providing an enriching, inclusive musical experience for many residents of Pirton and the surrounding area while reducing social isolation and strengthening community ties.

*Funding will only be released on receipt and approval of all supporting documentation

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=Document Control:

Version	Issue Date	Changes
1.0	NA	First Draft (BE)

Reference	6114			
Name of Organisation	Whitwell 25 FC			
Organisation Type	Football Club			
Ward	Hitchwood			
Project Type	Recreation ground and pavilion hire			
Green option considered?	-			
NHC Councillor involvement that may constitute a conflict of interest	-			
Previous financial support within six years	-			
Documentation reviewed and approved*	Safeguarding	Yes	Accounts	Yes
	Demonstrates clear governance	Yes		
Total applied for	£1,125	Total project cost	£3,328	
Officer Summary				

Whitwell 25 FC is a senior football team aiming to re-establish competitive play within the local Sunday League at Whitwell Recreation Ground and Pavilion. A senior team previously existed but ceased operations due to challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic. The team seeks to reunite players and supporters, fostering engagement through football.

Residents of Whitwell and surrounding villages will benefit, not only as players but also as supporters. Football promotes both physical activity and social interaction, bringing people together through a shared interest in the sport. While the initial focus is on launching a men's team, future plans include expanding to women's and senior teams, in response to increasing local interest.

The club is seeking affiliation with the local Football Association to access additional resources and support for re-establishing the team.



To successfully restart and compete in the upcoming season, Whitwell 25 FC requires financial support to secure essential kit and equipment. Whitwell FC are requesting £1,125 towards recreation ground and pavilion hire, ensuring a dedicated space for matches and training.

Whitwell 25 FC have secured additional funding from:

- £400 membership contributions
- £1,016 from a secured long-term sponsor
- £787 from the Henry Smith Charity

This will be covering the purchase of full team kits, training equipment, and match essentials, including balls, goal nets, first aid kits, and corner flags.

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Districtwide Community Updates
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Community Grants Policy was updated in March 2025. Some changes to be aware of include changes to the minimum amount that can be applied for, the maximum amount that can be applied for and that Business Improvement Districts (BID's) can no longer apply as they have access to other funds via UKSPF. Please read the criteria in full on the NHC grants webpage Community grants North Herts Council. • Co-ordinating various local and district wide Network Groups including Youth Action, Food Provision, Arts and Culture and Green and Growing Group. • Coordinating voluntary support response to Asylum Seekers based in North Herts. • Continuing to facilitate NHC Councillors' Community Surgeries. • Sharing and disseminating information on social media and to mailing lists, keeping in touch with the community, voluntary, statutory, and non-statutory agencies.
Area Community Updates
<p>The Community Partnerships Officer Update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuing to attend Parish Council meetings to make closer links with the parishes and local groups. • Visited Knebworth Community Library to find out more on events, support and community links. • Attended the Hertfordshire Refugee & Asylum Seeker Conference 2025. • Offley & Stopsley Cricket Club have purchased the bowling machine and mobile cricket cage after receiving the Southern Rural Community grant in September 2024. <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;">   </div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please feel free to arrange any meetings or ward walks with the Community Partnerships Officer to learn more about local groups and issues in your area.

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