

**SOUTHERN RURAL COMMITTEE
30 NOVEMBER 2017**

***PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT**

AGENDA ITEM No.

6

TITLE OF REPORT: GRANTS & COMMUNITY UPDATE

REPORT OF THE COMMUNITIES MANAGER

EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND RURAL AFFAIRS

PRIORITY: ATTRACTIVE AND THRIVING / PROSPER AND PROTECT / RESPONSIVE AND EFFICIENT

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 To advise the Committee on the current expenditure and balances of the Area Committee 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, which conform to the Authority's Grants Policy approved by Cabinet on June 14th 2016.
- 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 That the Committee be recommended to consider the provision of grant funding to the organisations outlined below:
 - 2.1.1 Offley Recreation Centre, Junior Soccer Section - £120 Ward Grant as outlined below in 8.1.1
 - 2.1.2 Offley Fishing Club Junior Section - £140 Ward Grant as outlined below in 8.1.2
 - 2.1.3 Kimpton History Group - £980.00 Ward Grant as outlined in 8.1.3
 - 2.1.4 Ickleford Sports Club -£ 950.00 as outlined below in 8.1.5
- 2.2 That the Committee endorses the actions taken by the Communities Officer to promote greater community capacity and well-being for the Southern Rural Area.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 To ensure the Committee is kept informed of the work of the Communities 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 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 existing Grants policy as agreed by Cabinet in June 2016.
- 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 Corporate 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 in the course of 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 with regard to funding proposals for Area Committee 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 Southern Rural Area Committee Budget Spread sheet, which relates to the Area Committee budget balances for 2017/18.
- 7.2 The spreadsheet also details pre-allocated sums carried forward from the previous financial years, including balances and past expenditure.
- 7.3 The current level of unallocated funds within the Committee's Development Budget for 2017/18 is **£8,600**.
- 7.4 The current level of unallocated within the Committee's Ward Members 2017/18 Budget is **£4,150**.

8. RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS

8.1 Grant Applications for Consideration

8.1.1 Offley Recreation Centre, Junior Soccer Section – Ward Grant Cllr Strong

The Offley Recreation Centre is requesting £120 to purchase practice footballs for the junior soccer section. If funding is agreed this will be released subject to the receipt of safeguarding policies as per the Authority's grant criteria

8.1.2 Offley Fishing Club Junior Section – Ward Grant Cllr Frost

The Offley Fishing Club has started up a junior section and has requested £140 towards the cost of purchasing junior sized kits. These will include high-visibility vests, whips with associated parts and landing nets.

If funding is agreed this will be released subject to the receipt of safeguarding policies as per the Authority's grant criteria.

8.1.3 Kimpton History Group – Ward Grant Cllr Bishop

A meeting has been held between the Communities Manager and Bob Malcolm, Juliet Morton, Tom Goldsmith (HCC Rights of Way) and Isobel Crozier (Countryside Management Services) to discuss two village walking maps – public footpaths and heritage trail.

It is hoped that the group will take this project forward with a designer that CMS use for 'Walking in Hertfordshire' leaflets as this has received a tendering process to ensure value for money and resulted in good quality designs.

From Kimpton's perspective it would be sensible if the two maps were linked with the same branding and also because some of the information will overlap. The walking maps will be produced in hard copy and online (HCC and Kimpton village websites so links can be included).

Bob Malcolm and Juliet Morton have volunteered to devise the walks.

The leaflet for public footpaths is being funded by a P3 (Parish, Paths Partnership) grant so we're asking if you would consider supporting the design and printing of a heritage trail leaflet that will be overseen by Kimpton History Group. A quote has been received from Paul Martin Associates for £980 to cover the cost of design, artwork and to re-draw the Kimpton village centre map and the printing of 500 copies.

8.1.4 Ickleford Sports Club

Ickleford Sports an Recreation Club have requested £950.00 to repair the path and paving which leads from the car park to the entrance to the clubhouse.

There are numerous broken paving slabs and some have lifted, resulting in the path being in a dangerous condition and a hazard to all those who use it.

In a standard week in the winter they have over 150 people using the sports facilities.

Although the profits from bar sales are sufficient to run the clubhouse and pay the associated bills, there is not enough left over for essential repairs and maintenance of the building.

The building was first opened in 1975 and since that time only essential repairs and maintenance have been undertaken due to the prohibitive cost of any improvement and updating work. The building is now getting old and is requiring additional maintenance in order to keep it operational and safe.

The sports club is open to all and is widely used by the local and wider community. It is a valuable asset to the village and has a thriving membership of girls, boys, men and women.

It is the only sports field in the village and is strongly supported by the Parish Council who recognises the importance of having such a facility in the village. Two Parish Councillors are currently serving on the club's committee.

A break down of the costs of this project is outlined below:

Lift the 27 broken slabs and dig out existing base.

Re-lay new slabs on a new base and renew the concrete around the drain cover at the entrance to the car park end of the path.

Materials (including waste removal) are £450.00 and it is 2 days labour for 2 men, costing £500.00 Total £950.00

The club are currently seeking additional funds from Ickleford Parish Council for other repair work that is urgent throughout the clubhouse building. They have also been granted £500 from Cllr. David Barnard's Hertfordshire County Council's Locality Budget for urgent repairs to the bar floor which have now been completed

8.2 Update on Community Engagement

8.2.1 UU's / s106 Contributions & Funding Advice

The Community Development Team is liaising with a number of Parishes and rural groups re the potential unlocking of collected UU (Unilateral Undertakings) & s106 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.

The Officers are also liaising with a number of community facilities within the Southern Rural Area re potential applications to the Authority's Community Facilities Capital Projects Funding Scheme. The scheme is currently open to community groups and organisations seeking capital funding assistance for awards between £10k & £50k to help enhance local community facilities in order to make them sustainable for future years.

Current Parishes / groups seeking advice / support:

- **Offley & Cockernhoe PC** – Major enhancements to facilities at the Recreation Centre utilising £214k s106 developer contributions and improvements to facilities at the village hall. Plus advice & support re a current Capital Projects Grant application to refurbish the Cricket Pavilion.
- **Holwell Parish Council** – Advice & support re capital funding to renew the Cricket / Football Pavilion and potential application to the Authority's new Community Facilities Capital Projects Improvement Funding Scheme and assistance from NHH.
- **Pirton Parish Council** – Advice & support re UUs & s106 funding.
- **Pirton Village Hall** – Advice & support re capital funding to provide an additional room for rental, improvements to the kitchen facilities and better storage.
- **Knebworth Parish Council** – Advice & support re the drawing down of UUs & s106 funds re enhancements to play equipment at Lytton Fields.

- **St Ippolyts** - Advice & support re the drawing down of UUs & funds to help fund the new provision of external gym / exercise equipment located at the recreation ground.
- **Lilley Village Hall & PC** – General grant funding advice re enhancements to the Village Hall and the possibility of developing a future Capital Projects Grant application.
- **Codicote** – John Clements Sports & Community Centre, advice & support re a current Capital Projects Grant application re the provision of a Health & Wellbeing Discovery Centre unit within the Centre itself.

8.3 **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.

9. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 Section 9.8.2 (g) of Constitution in respect of Area Committees' Terms of Reference provides 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". The Area Committees also have delegated power under section 9.8.1 (a) & (b) to allocate discretionary budgets and devolved budgets within the terms determined by the Council and outlined in the current Grant Policy agreed by Cabinet in June 2016.
- 9.2 Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 provides a General Power of Competence which gives local authorities the powers to do anything:-
 - An individual may generally do
 - Anywhere in the UK or elsewhere
 - For a commercial purpose or otherwise, for a charge or without a charge
 - Without the need to demonstrate that it will benefit the authority, its area or person's resident or present 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.

10. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1 All Area Committees saw a 55% decrease in funding in the 2016/17 financial year. There are 4 meetings in the 2017/18 Committee cycle and members must ensure that sufficient funding is available for all meetings.

11. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 There are no relevant risk entries that have been recorded on Pentana Performance, 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 All projects that are assigned area committee funding are assessed to ensure that they do not negatively impact on any part of the local community. The only deviation to this is where a minority or marginalised 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 The Social Value Act and "go local" policy do not apply to this report.

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 A – Southern Rural Committee Budget Sheet 2017/18

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17. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 17.1 Review of Policies and Procedures for Financial Assistance to Voluntary and Community Organisations, November 2002.
- 17.2 Review of Grant Policy Cabinet June 2016