

SOUTHERN RURAL COMMITTEE
29 October 2020

PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT

TITLE OF REPORT: GRANTS & COMMUNITY UPDATE

REPORT OF: THE POLICY & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT MANAGER

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

COUNCIL OBJECTIVE: BE A MORE WELCOMING AND INCLUSIVE COUNCIL / BUILD THRIVING AND RESILIENT COMMUNITIES / RESPOND TO CHALLENGES TO THE ENVIRONMENT / ENABLE AN ENTERPRISING AND CO-OPERATIVE ECONOMY /

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 the provision of grant funding to the organisations outlined below:
 - 2.1.1 £1,500 to Kings Walden Parish Council towards the cost of purchased and installation of sound monitoring equipment as outlined in 8.1.
- 2.2 That the Committee endorses the actions taken by the Community 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 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 existing Grants policy as agreed by Cabinet in January 2020.
- 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, following a 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 decision and has 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. Under the current grant criteria there is no upper limit outlined for grant funding to be allocated which can be decided at the Committee's discretion.

7.2 Members are asked to note the information detailed in Appendix 1. Southern Rural Committee Budget Spread sheet, which relates to the Area Committee budget balances for 2020/21. The spreadsheet also details pre-allocated sums carried forward from the previous financial years, including balances and past expenditure.

8. RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS

8.1 Grant Applications

8.1.1

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| Applicant | Kings Walden Parish Council |
| Project | Purchase of aircraft Noise Monitoring Equipment |
| Sum requested | £1,500 |
| Total project cost | £9,500 |
| Joint funding | £7,500 - Kings Walden PC £500 – HCC locality budget |
| Previous support | None |
| NHDC Policy met | Yes |
| Council Objectives | Build thriving and resilient communities / respond to challenges to the environment / Enable an enterprising and co-operative economy / Support the delivery of good quality and affordable housing |

As the parish is located directly under the flight path of Luton London Airport, the aircraft noise has a significant impact on community welfare. Noise pollution is an important environmental parameter. However, the airport is an important factor in the local economy.

By being able to independently monitor the aircraft noise will help to ensure sustainability and enable feedback to organisations such as:

- Residents of the parish
- Residents of surrounding parishes
- Residents of North Herts, Luton and St Albans Local government areas
- North Herts District Council planning and environment departments
- London Luton Airport Consultative Committee
- LADACAN

The Parish Council have in the past taken the opportunity to use portable noise monitoring equipment on loan through Luton Airport, but they would like to have their own equipment in order to independently have access to noise level reports.

The equipment will be permanently located at a suitable site either on the village hall or youth centre building. The noise monitoring information will feed straight into a computer and the data will be available to residents and local government in order to monitor the ongoing sound levels caused by aircraft taking off and landing at the nearby airport.

The Parish do not consider that any planning permission would be needed to site the equipment on the roof of a community building as it would be similar to the installation of a television aerial.

The PC will take out a maintenance contract with the company supplying the equipment which includes any calibration to ensure the correct readings.

Following consultation with NHDC's Environmental Protection & Housing Manager the following initial considerations were raised;

1. The airport has 3 fixed noise monitors that monitor the aircraft noise 24/7 and 7 portable noise monitors that can also monitor noise 24/7
2. Their noise equipment is maintained and calibrated
3. If the Parish Council made an application to the LAC Committee to have a portable noise monitors installed in the Parish, they would duly consider the application
4. The data from the Luton Airport noise monitoring locations can be viewed via the website <https://travisltn.topsonic.aero/>
5. In terms of the noise data Luton airport a system called Topsonic which is a specialised system for aircraft noise and flight tracking system. The noise being monitored needs to be able to correlate to the flights, rather than another noise such as a passing car, bird sat on the roof of the building, etc. The Parish council will not have access to this nor the radar data or flight detail that the airport has.
6. The opinion of the officer was that the proposal to install a sound level meter at Breachwood Green would not be of benefit to the council, the airport or others in a meaningful and useful manner.

The officer also advised that the council and others have made recommendations to Luton Airport in respect of, amongst other things noise monitoring.

At the time of writing, the officer has been trying to communicate with the applicant to provide some additional information to them that they may not be aware of and to clarify some queries.

8.2 **Grants Agreed by Delegated Decision on 30th July.**

The following two grants were processed under Delegated Decision by the Executive Member for Community Engagement in consultation with the Service Director for Legal and Community.

The relevant ward members were consulted with in addition to the Chair and Vice Chair of the Southern Rural Committee.

It was deemed necessary to use this process as the projects were time sensitive and the funds were required prior to the meeting scheduled for October.

8.2.2 **Ickleford Sports and Recreation Club**

The Club applied for £3,150 in order to purchase Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to be able to operate and re open to the public over the busy summer period.

In consultation with the ward member, chair and vice chair of the Southern Rural Committee this decision was made by Delegated Authority on 29th July 2020

To ensure the ISRC can open as soon as possible in line with the COVID-19 guidance. Funds would be spent on materials / processes to ensure they can open to the public again safely and with sufficient finances to provide all the necessary safety equipment / materials / seating etc. This will be a phased approach to ensure that this is managed as effectively as possible. The first stage will require opening the 'outdoor' decking area and lawn, whilst adhering to the social distancing, seating arrangements and appropriate management of sanitary and cleanliness duties.

The club provides a thriving and well supported sports facility and there is an obligation to ensure it is opened, whilst adhering to the necessary guidelines in order to create a safe and clean environment for its users.

The opening of the ISRC is important for the community as it is the central hub of the village for many. Not only does it support the social scene, it is central for the hundreds of adults and children that use the facility for their sporting activities. Opening the facility safely and effectively will allow the club to open its doors, and ensure the public are protected. A sporting facility in the village of Ickleford remains a hugely important asset to the community and as a self-funding establishment, support in these difficult times financially is crucial.

Every week the club is shut, the club are committed to paying their outgoings but are not receiving any income. This is not sustainable and the sooner a phased opening strategy can be implemented, the quicker they can rebuild the progress they were making and continue to move forward.

Following consultation with the Chair of the Southern Rural Committee, the Ward Member, the Parish Council and the Hertfordshire County Councillor the Chair of Southern Rural recommended that she would be happy to support the grant by matching the funding provided from the HCC Locality budget.

The Chair was not willing to provide the full amount requested as it was felt it may not leave enough in the Committee Budgets for applications to be considered at the next three meetings this Civic year.

Subsequently the Ickleford Sports and Recreation Club were awarded £2,000

8.2.3 **Lea Sports PSG Football Club**

The main activities of the club are to provide Football for residents of Pirton, Shillington & Gravenhurst ('PSG') and the surrounding areas. They are based on the Recreation Ground, Walnut Tree Road, Pirton.

The portable goal posts will be of benefit to the club members but also indirectly all users of Pirton Recreation Ground. The population of Pirton is around 1200 residents who are all potential users of the Recreation Ground.

Lea Sports PSG Football Club has been the village football club in Pirton since moving to the village in 1995. In the ensuing 25 years the nature of the Club has changed, with less emphasis being placed on adult football and much more on football activities for the youngsters of Pirton, Shillington & Gravenhurst (hence 'PSG') and the surrounding area.

Despite this change of emphasis, the Club still operated 4 adult teams (two on Saturdays and two on Sundays), as well as ten youth teams from ages Under Seven to Under Thirteen. This complement of 14 sides is very unusual for a small village of Pirton's size and is further strengthened by weekly training sessions for 5 & 6-year-olds and by award-winning training for local girls – the squad of 20 or so girls was rewarded by the Football Association in September 2018 for their enthusiasm and organisation with an all-expenses-paid trip to Wembley Stadium.

The Club has for many years enjoyed F.A. Charter Standard Development Club status, which means that all its coaches, managers and volunteers are DBS-checked and have the appropriate safeguarding and first-aid qualifications.

Recently the Club was successful in obtaining grant funding from the Football Foundation for the repair and renovation of the grass pitches at Pirton Recreation Ground. This fund is a 10-year collaboration between the Football Foundation and clubs of Development or Community status with the aim of greatly improving the standard of grass pitches across the country. The grant allows the Club to employ professional contractors to aerate, weed, fertilise and re-seed pitches to overcome the adverse effects of the 2018 heatwave and the very wet Autumn and Winter of 2019.

To maximise the effectiveness of the proposed treatments to the pitches, the Club is trying to move away as much as possible from the use of fixed goalposts. When fixed posts are in use – as they have been at the Recreation Ground for the last 25 years – it is always the same areas of the ground (penalty areas, goalmouths and centre circles) which suffer the most wear and which, over time, degrade to such an extent that any adverse weather has a disproportionately detrimental effect on their condition.

The youth teams already use portable goals so, within the physical constraints of the Recreation Ground, the pitch locations can be moved slightly so that the wear is not concentrated in the same areas. Now the Club wishes to extend this principle to its adult teams: this means removing the permanent metal sleeves which are currently sunk into the ground to hold the goalposts in place through the playing season. Instead the Club will invest in portable goals which can be wheeled into place for matches.

The benefits of this are two-fold: firstly the actual location of the pitch can be moved slightly through the course of the season, as described above; and secondly it means that the goal areas are not in constant use by casual players from outside the Club who just turn up at the Recreation Ground for a kickabout. (These players will of course still be able to turn up and use the Rec, but they will probably use a different patch of grass each time). The wider benefit is to the local community which can enjoy a healthy area of public land throughout the year, without having to avoid the muddy patches which exist at present.

With the District Council's help the Club can continue to provide a great footballing venue for players from age 5 to veterans for years to come, as well as enhancing the facilities of the Recreation Ground as a whole.

The ward member's and Chair of the Southern Rural Committee agreed to support this application with funding of £750 as the club membership draws from other areas outside of the district and they were also mindful that there are a further three meetings and a limited budget (as outlined in 10.1)

8.2 Highways Matters

- 8.2.1 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.

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 The Area Committees 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 January 2020. Section 9.8.2 (h) of the 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".
- 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 if 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 Committee budget 2020/21
- 10.2 There were carry over amounts from 2019/20 equating to £10,982 and these funds will be utilised ahead of allocating this financial year's budget. The grant funding agreed for March and June have been taken from this allocation in addition to two grants as mentioned in 8.2.2 and 8.2.3 which were made under delegated decision on 30th July. This has left a remaining amount in the carryover of £199
- 10.3 The 2020/21 budget contains £8,700 in addition to the £199 from 2019/20 provides a total budget of **£8,899**
- 10.4 The grant outlined in in this report equate to **£1,500**. If agreed by Members £199 will be utilised from the 2019/20 carry forward and £1,301 from the 20/21 budget. This will leave **£7,399** to utilise at the December and March meetings.

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

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 - 2019/20 financial year budget sheet

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 January 2020