

**SOUTHERN RURAL AREA COMMITTEE**  
**10<sup>th</sup> December 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 £800.00 to FC Comets towards the cost of purchasing a new set of metal goals to facilitate 5 a-side games of football for newly established teams at the under 7s and under 8s age groups. As outlined in 8.1.1
  - 2.1.2 £200.00 to Knebworth FC towards the cost of purchasing Gazebo structures for use on matchdays. As outlined in 8.1.2
  - 2.1.3 £1,250 to Offley Primary School towards the cost of purchasing equipment for a new afterschool club facility as outlined in 8.1.3

- 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

<b>Applicant</b>	<b>FC Comets</b>
<b>Project</b>	Metal Goal Posts
<b>Sum requested</b>	<b>£800.00</b>
<b>Total project cost</b>	£959.51
<b>Joint funding</b>	£159.51 from fundraising activities
<b>Previous support</b>	None
<b>NHDC Policy met</b>	YES
<b>Council Objectives</b>	Build thriving and resilient communities

The FC Comets run football teams for children and young people aged 6 to 18 years old and are based at Ickleford Sports & Recreation Ground.

The funding will be used to purchase a new set of metal goals to facilitate 5 a-side games of football for newly established teams at the under 7s and under 8s age groups. The new goals will enable children aged 6-9 who are on the waiting list to join the club once they are able to get match day facilities in place.

The goals will be used by 30-40 children who play at this age group each year. The goals have a long life of at least 10 years, meaning 300-400 children will directly benefit from their use.

The goals will be used at Ickleford Recreation ground. The goals will be used all year around. Matches take place between September to May on Saturday mornings and mid-week training occurs between April and October. FC Comets have a waiting list of children ready to play, once they have the match day equipment available, the main cost item of which are the goals.

Participation in regular physical exercise is proven to improve mental health and address the obesity epidemic faced by young people in the UK. The children are supported to play sport in a friendly and relaxed environment and grow as people and as teammates

The UK has one of the highest rates of childhood obesity in Europe. In 2018, around one in 10 children aged four to five were classified as obese, and around one in five children aged 10 to 11. Provision of regular and affordable sports for children outside of school seeks in some small way to tackle this issue.

This funding is specifically targeted at the entry age groups (6-8-year olds) into regular matches. Playing sport at this age creates a long-lasting love for exercise and recognition of the physical and mental benefits it provides.

Since lockdown applications to join the club has increased considerably. Another major change is the amount of volunteer parents coming forward to coach the junior teams. FC Comets assume that this is due to homeworking becoming more prevalent people can attend training during the week at times they would otherwise be travelling. The club have a waiting list of children ready to start which is why the new equipment is required.

If granted this funding will be used to purchase metal goals to allow matches to be played at Ickleford Recreation Ground by the under 7s and under 8s teams. The growth in the waiting list and willingness of new volunteer coaches means that as a club they can immediately put in place new teams. but without goals matches cannot be played. They also pride themselves on making the team affordable for new players.

8.1.2 -

<b>Applicant</b>	<b>Knebworth FC</b>
<b>Project</b>	Purchase of 2 x Gazebos for use on match days
<b>Sum requested</b>	<b>£200.00</b>
<b>Total project cost</b>	£400.00
<b>Joint funding</b>	£100 from Football Foundation and £100 from club reserves.
<b>Previous support</b>	£500 in March 2018
<b>NHDC Policy met</b>	Yes
<b>Council Objectives</b>	Build thriving and resilient communities

The Knebworth FC require Gazebo structures for use by home and away teams on matchdays.

They are unable to use the changing rooms at the Pavilion, Knebworth Recreation Ground due to Coronavirus social distancing restrictions.

As the weather gets wetter, they require some shelter for players before, during and after matches. Gazebo structures are ideal because they enable some sides to be left open creating a good air flow which is recommended to decrease the chances of infection of Coronavirus.

8.1.3

<b>Applicant</b>	<b>Offley Primary</b>
<b>Project</b>	Jesters Afterschool Club
<b>Sum requested</b>	<b>£1250.00</b>
<b>Total project cost</b>	£1750.00
<b>Joint funding</b>	£500 from PTA
<b>Previous support</b>	None – this is a new group
<b>NHDC Policy met</b>	YES
<b>Council Objectives</b>	Building Thriving and resilient communities

The Offley Primary School are setting up an out of hours after school club to serve the parents who live in the village of Offley and surrounding areas and work full time. The village is rural the community needs better access to high quality childcare provision.

As this is a brand-new provision the school need to purchase equipment to get them started. They would like to buy resources to develop the club environment so that the children have a stimulated place to spend their after-school time. They plan to purchase Covid safe furnishings such as wipe down large bean bags and pop-up tents with fairy lights. In addition to this they would like to purchase some more outdoor play equipment and a storage shed.

The club will be open to the 120+ pupils that attend the School, these come from Offley, Lilley, Hitchin, Hexton and other parts of North Herts.

The club will run during term time at first from 15:15 to 17:45

## 8.2 **Community Updates**

### 8.2.1 Section 106 funding

#### 1. **Pirton Bus Stop Shelter Refurbishment**

Pirton Parish Council will be using the £2,260.35 S106 funds held by NHDC for sustainable transport to refurbish the existing wooden shelter which is the main bus stop in the village. Pirton Parish Council are arranging for the work to be undertaken and will notify me when complete so that the funds can be transferred.

#### 2. **Codicote**

I have been liaising with Codicote Parish Council and Cllr. Moody to use £4,777.08 S106 funds for footpath improvements near the John Clements Sports and Community Centre; the S106 funds are a combination of the following amounts held by NHDC:

- Community centres £2,283.15
- Information open spaces £1,485.59
- Leisure £1,008.34

Codicote Parish Council are arranging for the work to be undertaken and will notify me when complete so that the funds can be transferred.

### 8.2.2 Ickleford Parish Council – Volunteer Gardening Project

Working to advise the Ickleford PC on setting up a project to help people who struggle to keep their gardens neat and tidy due to health issues. The project aims to provide volunteers to undertake garden clearances for those most in need. The Parish Council were initially looking at operating a project themselves, but officers put them in contact with Groundwork Hertfordshire who have an existing project, that does this. Also put them in contact with NHCVS and other contacts that could assist / advise on the best way to run a project of this kind.

### 8.2.3 Liaising with Holwell Parish council to apply to the Community Facility Capital Grant fund to rebuild the Holwell Cricket Pavilion in order to provide a much-needed additional community space in the village.

### 8.2.4 The Community Engagement Team have been liaising with all the Food Provision Groups and Foodbanks in the district including many groups in the Southern Rural Area.

We are using funding provided from DEFRA via the County Council to provide supermarket vouchers to the food banks. These will be going to Codicote Foodbank, who also serve Knebworth and Ickleford Community Larder who also serve Holwell and Pirton.

## 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, June and October have been taken from this allocation. The has remaining amount in the carryover of £199 has been used towards the grant awarded to Kings Walden Parish Council for Noise monitoring equipment. Therefore, last years budget is now all spent.
- 10.3 The 2020/21 budget of £8,700 has been used to provide the remainder of the Kings Walden grant of £1,301 and therefore leaves an amount to spend of: **£7,399**

- 10.4 If agreed by Members, the three grants outlined in in this report equate to **£2,250**  
This will leave **£5,149** to utilise at the last meeting of the civic year in March.

## **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