

**SOUTHERN RURAL COMMITTEE
24 JUNE 2021**

***PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT**

TITLE OF REPORT: GRANTS & COMMUNITY UPDATE

REPORT OF: THE POLICY & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT MANAGER

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

COUNCIL PRIORITIES: BUILD THRIVING AND RESILIENT COMMUNITIES

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 **£500** to Lilley Parish Council towards the cost of a new notice board for the village outlined in 8.1.1
- 2.3 **£1,500** to Kimpton Cricket Club towards the purchase of a wicket mower as outlined in 8.1.2
- 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 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, 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 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 Committee Budget Spread sheet, which relates to the Committee budget balances for 2021/22. 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 as long as the committee has sufficient funds in the 2021/2022 budget.

8.1 Grant Applications

8.1.1

Applicant	Lilley Parish Council
Project	New notice board
Sum requested	£500
Total project cost	£1,046
Joint funding	£546 from Parish Council funds
NHDC Policy met	YES
Council Priorities	Build thriving and resilient communities

The Lilley Parish Council are requesting grant funding to replace the outdated and damaged noticeboard used by many residents of the village to advertise their events as well as by Lilley Parish Council to display their meeting minutes and agendas.

Under the current criteria agreed in January 2020 Parish Councils can make an application for grant funding to the relevant area committee if the activity is providing additionality to their usual responsibilities.

8.1.2

Applicant	Kimpton Cricket Club Limited
Project	Purchase of a wicket mower
Sum requested	£1,500
Total project cost	£6,200
Joint funding	£1,200 donations from club members £3,500 national lottery community fund
NHDC Policy met	YES
Council Priorities	Build thriving and resilient communities

The KCC committee are seeking funding to purchase equipment to underpin the investment that they made last year to make material improvement to the playing surface.

Specifically, they would like to purchase a wicket mower. They realise a new machine is beyond their means but seek funding for a refurbished model. Reconditioned machines of the type they need (incorporating cassettes for cutting, scarifying, aerating etc) are available from several renowned providers at a significant discount to the cost of new ones.

Following a report from Jerry Dovey, the Hertfordshire County Cricket Association ground coordinator, the club renovated the existing square and incorporated an artificial wicket. The virtues of a properly constructed and maintained playing surface are numerous, and include:

- An improvement in the consistency of bounce on the square allows for both an improvement in the health and safety position for current players (particularly younger...and older.... ones) and will encourage participation by those who currently need to travel outside the parish to find clubs whose facilities match their aspirations
- Whilst being equipped to deal with increased usage the renovated square will prove easier and more cost effective to maintain provided, they have the appropriate machinery
- Cricket is aiming to be inclusive and working towards becoming more culturally diverse as a sport. The club expect that by increasing the breadth of participation will naturally enhance the viability of Kimpton cricket club and sustain their ability to remain custodians of a key village amenity.

By improving the playing surface and adding extra facilities will have a significant impact on the club, the community and the playing opportunities for potential future cricketers in the village. The club will be able to offer a better experience to those playing and attract a wider range of participants.

As noted above they will be able to deliver a wider range of cricketing experiences including league cricket, children's coaching programmes, midweek nets, shorter forms of the game (T20 etc) and enable the local school to use facilities that were previously unavailable.

Those making use of the facilities will benefit from the physical exercise and from the social aspects of playing a team sport.

The club intends to use the benefits from this investment as a springboard towards future improvements including the pavilion, to the breadth of playing teams (including a league team and a colts team) with a view to establishing the long term future of the club as a key part of the village for years to come.

It is the ambition of the Kimpton Cricket Club to attract more young players to the club will also help us achieve longer-term sustainability for the club and for the benefits it brings to the wider community.

The equipment they wish to purchase are as follows:

Dennis FT610 Sports Mower	£3,200 + vat
Scarifying, aerating, slitting cassettes	£2,000 + vat
Total	£6,200 inc vat

8.2 Community Engagement and update on Previous Grants awarded

8.2.1 Policy and Community Engagement Team

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

- Facilitating network meetings to ensure community groups are kept in touch.
- 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.
- Investigating the possibility of conducting face to face councillor surgeries again in line with Covid 19 health and safety concerns and current government guidelines.
- Attending meetings of the North Herts Youth Strategy Group, North Herts Families First and the Family Support Service Partnership.
- Liaising with a new Codicote Peace Memorial Hall regarding a potential Capital Funding application
- Supporting the setup of the River Hiz Conservation group in partnership with the Ickleford PC.
- Liaising with the Kimpton PC and the Bright Star Public House in Peters Green. Regarding the installation of a defibrillator to be sited in the red telephone box that is owned by the pub. An application for funding towards this project may be forthcoming at the next committee meeting.

8.2.2 Update on Previous Grants Awarded

- Holwell PC Noticeboard
The Holwell Parish Council were awarded £744 towards the cost of a new notice board at the last meeting in March. The notice board has been purchased and is due to be installed on June 5th.

- Holwell Pavilion
The Parish Council have been successful in applying for £50,000 from the Community Facility Capital Grant Fund. This will be used towards rebuilding the pavilion to enable wider community use, not only for sports but also for community meetings, family parties and health and wellbeing activities.
- Elmtree Avenue Play area – update from David Sample clerk at Offley PC
The play equipment has been ordered and the lead time was 12 weeks.
The contractor is due on site sometime in June.

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 January 2020. 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 A Committee budget 2021/22
- 10.2 The carry over amount from 2020/21 was £165.00.

The budget for 2021/22 is £8,700 therefore the total funds available to allocate this financial year is £8,865

- 10.3 The grant funding applications for this meeting total **£2,000**.
If all the grants considered at this meeting are agreed it will leave a it will leave £6,865 for the remaining three 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 The decision to purchase of a mower ought to take into consideration the evident changes in the environment. Warmer and wetter winters and hotter and drier summers are being experienced in the UK and may affect the conditions in which any outdoor sports are played, now and in the future.

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 – 2021/22 Financial Year Budget Sheet.

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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