

**SOUTHERN RURAL COMMITTEE 21 OCTOBER 2021**

**\*PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT**

**TITLE OF REPORT:** GRANTS & COMMUNITY UPDATE

**REPORT OF:** THE POLICY & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT MANAGER

**EXECUTIVE MEMBER:** COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

**CURRENT 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 **£1,120** to Kimpton Parish Council towards the cost provision of a defibrillator to be situated within a red telephone kiosk outside the Bright Star PH in Peters Green as outlined in 8.1.1
- 2.3 **£5,449** to Offley Allotment Association towards the installation of running water on the allotment sites. outlined in 8.1.2
- 2.4 **£2,225** to Wymondley Parish Council to purchase of and installation of a Tier 1 defibrillator as outlined in 8.1.3
- 2.5 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 if the committee has sufficient funds in the 2021/2022 budget.

## 8.1 Grant Applications

### 8.1.1

<b>Applicant</b>	<b>Kimpton Parish Council</b>
<b>Project</b>	Provision of a defibrillator.
<b>Sum requested</b>	<b>£1,120</b>
<b>Total project cost</b>	£1,720
<b>Joint funding</b>	£600 split between Kimpton PC and Peters Green Village Hall
<b>NHDC Policy met</b>	YES
<b>Council Priorities</b>	Build thriving and resilient communities

The Kimpton PC have worked in partnership with the Bright Start Public House and Peter's Green Village Hall on a project to situate a defibrillator in the red telephone kiosk provided by the pub for use for residents and visitors of Peters Green.

The residents of the hamlet, Peters Green, have lobbied for the provision of a life-saving defibrillator to be located within a red telephone kiosk outside the Bright Star PH. Currently the closest defibrillator is 2 miles away in Kimpton.

Defibrillators (also known as AEDs) are medical devices that help and support a rescue for a patient in Cardiac Arrest. An automated external defibrillator is a portable electronic device that automatically diagnoses the potentially life-threatening cardiac arrhythmias of ventricular fibrillation and ventricular tachycardia in a patient, and can treat them through defibrillation, the application of electrical therapy which seeks to stop the arrhythmia, allowing the heart to re-establish an effective rhythm.

The defibrillator chosen has the latest functionality, is easy to use and is suitable for use on adults and children. It is the same brand and model as those situated in other parts of the parish. This gives consistency across the parish which is important as Community Heartbeat Trust provide community training sessions generating knowledge and confidence in the mobilisation of the unit by residents.

Community Heartbeat Trust pioneered the concept of Community Public Access Defibrillators (CPAD) in the UK.

The Parish Council have agreed to take on the maintenance responsibility of the equipment going forward.

### 8.1.2

<b>Applicant</b>	<b>Offley Allotment Association</b>
<b>Project</b>	Installation of running water on the allotment sites.
<b>Sum requested</b>	<b>£5,449</b>
<b>Total project cost</b>	£5,449
<b>Joint funding</b>	£400 Quiz Night
<b>NHDC Policy met</b>	YES
<b>Council Priorities</b>	Build thriving and resilient communities

The Offley Allotment Association were set up this year in order to provide allotments for the members of the allotment association, therefore benefiting the local community with a source of fresh fruit and vegetables, exercise and community spirit.

If successful, this grant would be spent on installing running water on the allotment sites. Currently, plot holders do not have access to these facilities, which will reduce the long-term sustainability of the site as members are less willing to rent allotment plots without these facilities. Following the cost of the initial installation and setup, plot holders will pay individually for water usage. As the site currently hosts 29 plots, this means that in just three years the 'investment' cost per plot, per annum will be less than £63.

Offley Allotment Committee believes that this offers significant value for money as the positive social impact on the health and wellbeing of Offley residents by providing access to a thriving allotment site is significant. The site and the allotmenting community are a longstanding and much-loved feature of Great Offley, with a regular allotment blog in the Village Voice magazine and strong links to the local school. Unfortunately, there is a risk that if they are unable to provide basic facilities such as security and water, fewer residents will want to maintain allotments on this site and a valuable community asset could be lost. The association is also committed to maintaining accessible rent pricing so that anyone can contribute and benefit from having an allotment, without funding to support specific improvement works this will pose a significant challenge.

The site benefits all allotment members, local wildlife (troughs will give drinking water), the local school and the community as a whole. With a diverse population of older adults and young families, the allotments serve as a source for community cohesion and education. The Offley Endowed Primary and Nursery School has had a plot for many years, which they use to inspire and educate young pupils. A large proportion of plot holders are older and/or retired, for many of them the allotments play a key role in their physical and mental wellbeing, as well as offering opportunities to socialise. Since the association was founded earlier this year, they have also seen an influx of young professionals and young families to the allotment site, creating opportunities for well-established and newly arrived residents to forge connections. Finally, the allotments provide a haven for local wildlife and insects, with several plots featuring bug hotels. The association is currently considering a proposal from members to dedicate a portion of the site to wildflowers, which would also benefit the local bee population. This will be challenging or impossible to maintain without viable water provision.

The water installation will be completed within 6 months of the full amount being fundraised/received.

The allotment committee are striving to make the allotments a community hub, using them as a way to promote and encourage community spirit and the enjoyment of allotment gardening and develop the community's gardening skills and knowledge.

The allotment fundraising committee are also actively involved in providing events that not only are a fundraising asset but also provide some much-needed community engagement. For example, the allotment fundraising committee have arranged to run a 'Christmas Market' and the Christmas Light switch on in the village as well as a quiz night in the village hall and further events are planned in the future. By creating a thriving and proactive community group, they hope to create new opportunities to bring people together and to engage with local businesses. For example, the Christmas Market

fundraising event planned for December 2021 will likely include local entrepreneurs and artisans from Offley Hoo farm.

The costs are outlined below:

Affinity water to instal a water supply from the road onto the allotment plot, including all contestable and non-contestable works	£3,660.00
Water pipes, connectors, stop clock, digger hire, labour and water troughs	£1,789.70
Total (A)	£5,449.70

### 8.1.3

<b>Applicant</b>	<b>Wymondley Parish Council</b>
<b>Project</b>	provision of a defibrillator.
<b>Sum requested</b>	<b>£2,225</b>
<b>Total project cost</b>	£2,225
<b>Joint funding</b>	None identified
<b>NHDC Policy met</b>	YES
<b>Council Priorities</b>	Build thriving and resilient communities

Funding is requested for the purchase of and installation of a Tier 1 defibrillator (i.e., one that suits the community/untrained user situation). The defibrillator will be installed on the outside wall of the Bucks Head Public House, Little Wymondley SG4 7HY so it is in a central and easily accessible location within the Parish and access to it will be available 24 hours a day/ 7 days a week. The Parish Council have permission to site the equipment in this location.

There is currently one defibrillator within the Parish, but this is installed inside the Sports Pavilion at Little Wymondley Recreation Ground. Accessibility to it depends on the Sports Pavilion being in use; it is primarily for use by the sports clubs and teams that use the Sports Pavilion.

Various quotes have been obtained for defibrillators but following research with other Clerks it is felt that the defibrillators offered by the Community Heartbeat Trust on a Managed Solution Partnership offer the best value for money.

The need for a fully accessible defibrillator within the Parish has again been highlighted by events during the opening matches of the delayed Euros 2020; proximity to these life saving devices can help save the life of someone experiencing a sudden cardiac arrest.

St John's Ambulance encourages all workplaces, schools, and public buildings to have a defibrillator on site.

The Parish Council will also seek to identify training for interested local residents on how to undertake CPR and to use the defibrillator e.g., from St Johns' Ambulance.

No one organisation has the legal responsibility to provide a defibrillator for use by members of a community. However, given the need to be able to access one quickly if someone is having a cardiac arrest either at home, whilst at work or visiting others. It makes sense that this is done on a small geographic scale e.g., on a Parish basis. The Parish Council considers that the health and welfare of its parishioners will benefit from having a fully accessible defibrillator; it is envisaged that it could well save a life/ lives. The Parish Council does not have the finance to achieve this as it has other funding priorities at the present time, including ones that have arisen as a result of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Parish Council will be responsible for the ongoing maintenance of the defibrillator once purchased and installed.

## **8.2 Community Engagement Update**

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

- Supporting various local and district wide Network Groups such as Youth Action, Food Provision and the newly formed Arts and Culture Network.
- Continuing to work with, and add to, the Arts Cooperative which was set up after the Hitchin Arts and Culture Town Talk
- Assisting in Charnwood House (former Hitchin Museum) Open Days.
- 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.
- Gathering speakers and information for the Cabinet Panel for Community Engagement and Co-operative Development.
- Assisting in the organisation of the Chair's Volunteer Awards and next year's Holocaust Memorial Day Event.
- Working with groups to help them secure funding from the new Health Protection Board Covid Fund.

## **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 this was utilised as part of the £500 grant to Lilley Parish Council for their notice board.

The budget for 2021/22 is £8,700 and the £1,500 awarded to Kings Warden PC for the Sound Monitoring equipment has been returned. Therefore, there was £10,200 to utilise in the budget, £2,835 has been spent at the meeting in June.

Therefore, the total funds available to allocate this financial year is **£7,365**

- 10.3 The grant funding applications for this meeting total £8,794.00, which exceeds the amount available to grant in the budget by £1,429.00 (£8,794.00 - £7,365.00 = £1,429.00).  
The committee is not able to allocate more than the available area committee budget. If the three grant applications considered at this meeting are approved for funding, then the committee members will need to agree as to what specific proportion each project will receive from the £7,365.00 available.

## **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 Environmental Impact Assessment has been undertaken. The application for Offley Allotment and the related actions have been considered and on balance it is likely that positive environmental impacts will outweigh and outnumber any negative impacts. The allotment makes good use of water butts to collect rain water and this will remain their preferred water source. However, drier spells mean that there is a need for a supplementary water source on-site. An on-site source can help to reduce the journeys made by car to the allotment as there will no longer be a need to transport water from home. It is therefore suggested to proceed with 'No major change' to the actions. Please see the attached Environmental Impact Assessment for further information

## **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.
- 16.2 Appendix 2 – Environmental Impact form for Offley Allotment Association

## **17. CONTACT OFFICERS**



17.1 Author: Claire Morgan, Community Engagement Team Leader  
Email: [Claire.morgan@north-herts.gov.uk](mailto:Claire.morgan@north-herts.gov.uk) ext. 4226

Contributors: Reuben Ayavoo, Policy & Community Engagement Manager  
Email: [reuben.ayavoo@north-herts.gov.uk](mailto:reuben.ayavoo@north-herts.gov.uk) ext. 4212

Anne Miller, Assistant Accountant  
Email: [Anne.Miller@north-herts.gov.uk](mailto:Anne.Miller@north-herts.gov.uk) ext. 4374

Yvette Roberts, Legal Officer  
Email: [Yvette.roberts@north-herts.gov.uk](mailto:Yvette.roberts@north-herts.gov.uk) ext. 4310

Laura Bignell, Acting Human Resources Operations Manager  
Email: [Laura.Bignell@north-herts.gov.uk](mailto:Laura.Bignell@north-herts.gov.uk) ext. 4347

Tim Everitt, Performance & Risk Officer  
Email: [tim.everitt@north-herts.gov.uk](mailto:tim.everitt@north-herts.gov.uk) ext. 4646

## **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