

**SOUTHERN RURAL COMMITTEE
8 MARCH 2018**

***PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT**

AGENDA ITEM No.

7

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 Knebworth Football Club, - £250 Ward Grant from Cllr Deakin-Davies as outlined below in 8.1.1
 - 2.1.2 Stepping Stone Pre-School- £250 Ward Grant from Cllr Deakin-Davies as outlined below in 8.1.2
 - 2.1.3 Cockenhoe Memorial Hall - £2,400 towards play ground equipment as outlined in 8.1.3
 - 2.1.4 Pirton Table Tennis Club - £ 1,066.00 as outlined below in 8.1.4
 - 2.1.5 Waste Not Want Not - £1,880 towards the installation of an disabled accessible portable toilet

2.1.6 That any unspent funds from the 2017/18 financial year be allocated to Community Initiatives.

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 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 **£7,470**.
- 7.4 The current level of unallocated within the Committee's Ward Members 2017/18 Budget is **£3,090**.

8. RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS

8.1 Grant Applications for Consideration

8.1.1 Knebworth FC– Ward Grant Cllr Deakin-Davies

Knebworth Football Club are an FA Charter Standard Development Club, who provide facilities, promote and offer opportunities to play football, with teams for boys and girls from the age of 3 through to seniors and veterans.

Knebworth FC is looking to develop girl's football by offering free training sessions at a local school. They are requesting a total of £250 to cover the costs of equipment including footballs, cones and kit which will be used during the sessions.

Providing free football sessions will create opportunities for girls to be physically active, learn new skills and provide pathways to playing football both inside and outside of school.

The KFC last received grant funding of £1000 in March 2016 towards improvements to the facility.

8.1.2 Stepping Stone Pre School– Ward Grant Cllr Deakin-Davies

Stepping Stone Pre School offers children a wide curriculum that allows them to explore both academic subjects, such as literacy, numeracy and science as well as creative and physical activities that currently include music, yoga and dance.

They are looking to introduce a sports programme, which will deliver weekly sport sessions to the children by a qualified sports coach. Stepping Stone Pre School are requesting £250 to cover the cost of the 10 super sports coaching sessions.

More traditional sports may benefit those children who are less drawn to dance and yoga and encourage them to be physically active. There is limited outdoor space for children to run around in for unstructured activity, so provision of safe organised sport is especially important.

The Stepping Stone Pre School last received grant funding of £500 from the Southern Rural Committee in 2009.

8.1.3 Cockernhoe Memorial Hall

The Elmtree Community land was given to the parish council after the completion of the new North Herts Homes houses back in 2012. The field is maintained by the parish council and a couple of new benches have been added with the request from the residents.

There has been great interest from the residents to build an under 11s play area with equipment including include swings, a slide and play mobiles (ride on animals on a spring). There are many social and developmental benefits for children, play areas enable children to exercise and participate in creative activities. It also creates a strong sense of community and belonging as it engages residents in more social activities.

The cost for equipment and installation has been quoted by Wickstead Playgrounds as £38,455 (excluding VAT)

Cockernhoe Memorial hall are requesting £2,400 from the Southern Rural Committee to cover some of the costs to build the play area. The group are hoping for a contribution from the Parish Council of £5000 via Section 106 funds and a discount from the supplier of £1,750.

If the group are successful in raising these funds in order to finance the project they would still need to find further funding in the region of £30k. They also have not mentioned how they intend to finance the regular inspections of the equipment that would be necessary to fulfil health and safety requirements.

If members are minded to allocated funding to the project officer recommendation would be that funds are not released until the group have the remainder of the funding in place to undertake the project.

The Memorial Hall has not received funding from Southern Rural Committee since 2012 when they were awarded £1000 towards an air conditioning system.

8.1.4 Pirton Table Tennis Club

Pirton Table Tennis Club are an unregistered charity, that provide members of the community with the opportunity to play a sporting activity which may be less physically demanding than some of the other sports available in Pirton.

Currently, the club are using Pirton Sports and Social Club as a venue. However, this venue is not ideal as the surrounding equipment makes it unsafe. In April this year, the club will be relocating to the Village Hall and are requesting £1,066 to cover the cost of purchasing two table tennis tables and nets, and nine sports hall dividers.

Members of the club and other local residents who play on a regular basis will benefit from the new venue and equipment. This will also allow members to play in a safe environment as well as provide more playing opportunities for the club to grow in numbers allowing more members of the community to take part as additional equipment will be available.

This is basically a new group setting up in the village hall and as such they have not received funds from NHDC in the past.

8.1.5 Waste Not Want Not

Waste not want not is a horticultural based social enterprise and community interest company which uses horticulture as a therapeutic tool, providing a safe environment where a wide range of people, often disadvantaged who can feel included in their local community through positive activity by working with plants.

The group would like to install a wheelchair accessible portable toilet with hand rails at their Roebuck site to enable them to welcome wheelchair users and those unable to use a standard portable toilet. Last year via fundraising efforts the group were able to install a large wheelchair accessible greenhouse at the Roebuck site to provide not only shelter for the volunteers but also an environment for those who are more comfortable working on a level surface and those in wheelchairs.

Currently the single standard portable toilet is not sufficient for the needs of wheelchair users and those who require the assistance of a walking stick or the help of others.

Currently this group of people are only able to attend the service for short periods of time. Waste Not Want Not would like to provide an accessible toilet so that this group of people are able to benefit from the project with the knowledge that they can take a comfort break with confidence and not worry about struggling with a standard portable toilet.

Local care homes have clients who have expressed an interest in attending the project and the accessible toilet would allow for targeted sessions for them. The accessible toilet would also provide a much needed extra facility to cope with sheer numbers of volunteers. It is not uncommon to see fifteen or more volunteers on any given day. The standard portable toilet is serviced regularly by a local company, Superloo who have already agreed to service an extra accessible toilet for a minimal cost.

Research has been undertaken into accessible toilets with the help of a wheelchair user who has advised us on accessibility in general at our site. Etoilets in Nazeing are able to provide an accessible toilet suitable for this project.

The group are able to build the base for the toilet and build a wheelchair accessible path to link the toilet to the greenhouse and to the Cabin where people congregate at break times and enjoy lunch together. The project aims to be fully inclusive and the addition of an accessible portable toilet would help significantly to reach out to a wider proportion of the local community.

The total cost of this project to purchase and install the accessible porta-loo would be £2,783 the group have currently raised just over £900 and will provide in-kind contribution of the labour required to build the path and base for the unit. Waste Not Want Not are requesting grant funding for the remaining £1,880

The group last received funding from the Committee in December 2014 to the value of £1500

8.2 **Update on Community Engagement**

The following venues in the Southern Rural area are currently going through the application process for the Community Facilities Capital Grant programme:-

Knebworth Scout and Guide Group - It was agreed after discussion to recommend an award of £32,000.

Pirton Village Hall - After discussion it was agreed to recommend the award of £45,000

Dacre Rooms, Kimpton awarded £50,000. To refurbish & update the ground floor rooms to make building a community hub for the whole parish. Refit unisex toilets, refurbish kitchen/bar area; utility area, porch & lobby: replace boiler, renew joinery, new ceiling wall & floor finishes.

1st stage of funding has been released and work is well underway, undertook site visit to inspect work on 25th January

John Clements Sports & Community Centre awarded £50,000 for the provision of a stand alone Health & Wellbeing Facility adjacent to the existing facility.

The project was revised and scaled down with a proposal to locate the Discovery Centre within the existing Sports & Community Centre.

8.2.1 Funding Advice

The Community Officer has been approached by both the Offley Pre School and the Offley School Association for advice on grant funding. The Pre School are seeking a considerable amount in order to replace the Porta-cabin that they are currently using.

The Offley School Association is seeking advice on how to find funding to purchase a mini-bus.

Officers will be meeting with both groups to discuss potential funding streams.

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.

Following the decision made at Full Council on 8th February to make efficiencies of a further 20% to Area Committee budgets the total budget for Southern Rural Area Committee for the 2018/19 financial year will be £11,000

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 1 – Southern Rural Area 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