

SOUTHERN RURAL COMMITTEE 03 MARCH 2022

*PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT

TITLE OF REPORT: GRANTS & COMMUNITY UPDATE

REPORT OF: THE POLICY & COMMUNITIES 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 **£5,000** to Codicote Tennis Club towards the installation of replacement LED floodlights as outlined in 8.1.1.
- 2.3 **£750** to Pirton Joycare towards an event to celebrate the Platinum Jubilee for over 60's as outlined in 8.1.2.
- 2.4 **£1500** to Pirton Players towards the purchase of LED stage lighting equipment and control desk as outlined in 8.1.3.
- 2.5 **£527** to Preston Parish Council towards the purchase of a cabinet for a defibrillator as outlined in 8.1.4
- 2.6 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, during 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 spreadsheet, 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.

As outlined in Item 10; the budget is not sufficient to cover all the applications as requested under 8.1 with a shortfall of £4,778

8.1 Grant Applications

8.1.1

Applicant	Codicote Tennis Club
Project	Installation of replacement LED floodlights
Sum requested	£5,000
Total project cost	£21,012
Match funding	£10,012 sinking fund £5,000 (not yet confirmed) Low Carbon workspaces grant £1,000 to be found
Previous support	2019: £3,500 resurfacing tennis courts 2015-2016: £8,000 tennis court repairs
NHDC Policy met	Yes
Council objectives	Be a more welcoming and inclusive Council Build thriving and resilient communities

Codicote Tennis Club caters for members and non-members from the local community and surrounding areas. They currently have 187 paid members and make three courts available to non-members on a pay and play basis.

The group are asking for funding towards installing LED replacement floodlights as the current halogen lights are 15 years old and will be subject to a substantial increase in maintenance costs as of June 2022, as component parts are becoming obsolete and may not be available in the future.

The ongoing costs of continuing with the current floodlights will shortly become unsustainable - £1,600pa. LED floodlights are more environmentally friendly, much cheaper to operate and will not be subject to an ongoing maintenance contract. LED replacement is both imperative and timely. If the project is completed before June the Club will receive a discount of £925 + VAT on the contracted full service (£18,435 + VAT).

If the floodlights are not replaced, the Club may be faced with not having any floodlights to play tennis in the evenings. At present, players are able to play until 10pm in the evenings with courts regularly used throughout the year for both adult and junior club sessions and competitions.

8.1.2

Applicant	Pirton Joycare
Project	Jubilee tea party
Sum requested	£750
Total project cost	£1,500
Match funding	£750 donations/fundraising
Previous support	2011: £1,250 Good Neighbourhood Scheme
NHDC Policy met	Yes
Council objectives	Be a more welcoming and inclusive Council Build thriving and resilient communities

Pirton JoyCare supports the elderly community who reside in Pirton by assisting with tasks including shopping, attending medical appointments, conducting home visits and arranging social activities (such as lunches, film matinees, outings and events) which provide an opportunity for individuals to find companionship, combat loneliness and enhance their wellbeing by encouraging them to remain active and engaged with their local community.

The grant would be used towards holding an afternoon tea party for the elderly community of Pirton, where they would be able to come together to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. The event would include afternoon tea and refreshments, decoration of the hall and entertainment celebrating the last 70 years, such as music and a quiz. Assistance to and from the venue would also be provided for those who require it.

The group would achieve value for money by accessing a concessionary rate for hiring the venue (Pirton Sports & Social Club) and using local volunteers to help organise and deliver the event and in turn minimise cost. The event would provide an opportunity for Pirton's elderly community to jointly celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee and build new friendship and support groups which could continue after the event.

There are circa 150-200 residents in Pirton who are aged 60 and over. The aim would be to attract as many as possible to the event. Based on 80 people attending the event the cost per person for the event equates to approximately £18.75.

8.1.3

Applicant	Pirton Players
Project	New lights and control desk
Sum requested	£1,500
Total project cost	£3,000
Match funding	£1,500 profits from previous shows
Previous support	None
NHDC Policy met	Yes
Council objectives	Be a more welcoming and inclusive Council Build thriving and resilient communities

Pirton Players perform plays and musicals, as well as running workshops at Pirton Village Hall.

The group would like funds to help replace the lights and control desk that they use, which are 40 years old.

The control desk has broken and is beyond economic repair. The lights all use incandescent bulbs which are hard to obtain when needing replacement. The Players would replace these with LED lights which are much more energy efficient and offer more flexibility.

They would like to have the lights and control desk before their next show in April.

8.1.4

Applicant	Preston Parish Council
Project	Defibrillator cabinet
Sum requested	£526.80
Total project cost	£772.80
Match funding	£246 from own funds
Previous support	2016: £400 Neighbourhood Plan publicity material
NHDC Policy met	Yes
Council objectives	Be a more welcoming and inclusive Council Build thriving and resilient communities

The defibrillator in the Red Lion Pub car park in Preston is housed in a cabinet which is now starting to come to the end of its life. Preston Parish Council would like funds to help replace the cabinet.

The defibrillator is a vital resource for an emergency because of the rural nature of Preston and the distance and time required for ambulances to reach the village. The cabinet is locked to prevent vandalism and unauthorised use. The code is given by the ambulance service if the defibrillator is required in an emergency situation.

There are approximately 400 people in the parish, however with a potential 31 houses soon to be built this number will increase. Plus, Preston has a lot of visitors for walks and cycling so the number of people who could possibly benefit from the defibrillator if they needed it would far exceed the number of local residents.

The Parish Council funds replacement pads every two years, or more often should the defibrillator be used.

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:

- Liaising with colleagues in Planning and Lilley Parish Council to secure S106 funding to purchase and install a defibrillator on the Cassel Memorial Hall
- Processing grants to utilise the £100k Health Protection Board funding to assist the community's recovery following the Covid 19 Pandemic. Currently 16 grants being processed in this round and we're now applying for a further £50k for another round. We have a waiting list of five applications.

- Processing and working with Food Provision Groups to distribute the Winter Support grants and the new Household Support Grants, either by direct funding or provision of supermarket vouchers.
- 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.
- 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 Recognition Awards

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 current balance available in the budget to allocate at this meeting is £2,999. The total amount of funding requested adds up to £7,777, this leaves a shortfall of £4,778
- 10.3 Members are reminded that they cannot spend more than is available in the budget.

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 rainwater, 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 onsite 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.

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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