

**North Herts Council
SOUTHERN RURAL AREA FORUM**

**Meeting held at Offley Village Hall, Luton Road, Offley, SG5 3DG
On Thursday, 22nd JUNE 2023 at 7.30pm**

NOTES

Present: *Councillor David Barnard (DB) (Chair), Councillor Ralph Muncer (RM) (Vice-Chair), Councillor Dominic Griffiths (DG), Councillor Lisa Nash (LN), Councillor Louise Peace (LP), Councillor Claire Strong (CS) and Councillor Mandi Tandi (MT).*

In Attendance: *Aimee Flack (AF) (Community and Partnerships Officer) John Marshall (JM) (Community Safety Team Leader) and Councillor Ruth Brown (RB) (Deputy Leader of the Council, Executive Member for Planning and Transport)*

Also present: *At the commencement of the meeting there were 6 members of the public, including registered speakers.*

Meeting Started at **7:33pm**

1. Chair's Announcements

Cllr Barnard welcomed everyone in attendance.

- Highlighted that it's an informal, inclusive meeting to share ideas.
- Members were reminded they are making recommendations and not decisions for grant applications.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Terry Tyler, Ian Moody and Faye Frost. Cllr Claire Strong was delayed due to attending an earlier meeting.

2. Public Participation

Aimee Flack, the Community and Partnership Officer updated Members of community grant budgets. Also highlighted that if the application for Kimpton Parish Council and Offley Parish Council is recommended, funds would be released once updated safeguarding policies have been approved.

Received presentations in support of grant applications by the following:

Kimpton Parish Council were unable to send someone to present. Cllr Ralph Muncer gave a summary of the application.

DG – highlighted how the refurbished pavilion at Wymondley has attracted new users.

Cllr Ray Blake presented the Ickleford Parish Council application

DB – commented that it's good to encourage sport and recreation.

Parish Clerk, David Sample presented the Offley Parish Council application

DB – commented that it's a lovely area used by people in the village and those visiting.

Kimpton Vote

Before the vote, there was a discussion around funding pots:

- the Capital facilities fund has now all been allocated
- suggested the forum ask at full council for further funding for the Southern Rural area.
- other funding highlighted - [North Herts Grants | Beds & Luton Community Foundation \(blcf.org.uk\)](#) and [Members locality budget | Hertfordshire County Council](#)
- A successful project to contact for advice on funding - [The John Clements Sports & Community Centre, Codicote \(jc-codicote.org\)](#)

Unanimous vote in favour of recommending Kimpton Parish Council's application for £1,000 towards refurbishing Kimpton Pavilion on Kimpton Recreation Ground.

Ickleford vote

LP – highlighted their support of the proposal.

Majority voted in favour of recommending Ickleford Parish Council's application for £2,000 towards new ECO Tumble safety surfacing for the play area at the recreation ground in Chambers Lane, Ickleford.

6 – in favour of recommending

1 – abstained as wasn't present for the presentation.

Offley Parish Council Vote

Unanimous vote in favour of recommending Offley Parish Council's application for £610 towards two new benches for the Offley Recreation Centre.

3. Information Note: Grants & Community Update

Aimee Flack, Community and Partnerships Officer gave presentation on the Community Update

Further to the report, highlighted that there is interest from schools in the Southern

Rural area for Councillors to visit and discuss local democracy.
There were some questions relating to the report which were addressed.

4. Presentations

John Marshall, Community Safety Team Leader at North Herts Council presented on fly-tipping in rural areas

In 2019/20 there were 603 investigations
During covid lockdown up 74%, 2022/23 839 investigations (still up nearly 40 %)

Reporting fly-tips:

- Best ways are via online tool on North Herts Council website [Fly-tipping | North Herts Council \(north-herts.gov.uk\)](#) or call Customer Service Centre [Contact us | North Herts Council \(north-herts.gov.uk\)](#).
- Using 'What three words' – helps to identify the area.
- Photos help.
- Don't interfere as it could compromise prosecution.
- CCTV/Dashcam Car evidence helps
- NHC will only clear public land. If on the road it maybe that Herts County Council will have to clear it. The same with bridleways and country footpaths. If access is blocked HCC will clear.
- Ditches – not responsibility of North Herts Council but for the landowner adjacent to the ditch.
- Highlighted that North Herts Council offers waste clearance service. [Bulky waste items | North Herts Council \(north-herts.gov.uk\)](#)
- Waste apps – don't advise using them as many on there are not registered.

Opened to questions

Discussion around how residents can learn and be more aware. Main advice is to check the waste clearance company have a license, make sure to pay in a correct manner and have photo of the van.

Discussion around more universal approach with disposing waste at tips. The decision for non-Herts residents not being able to use Herts tips has been postponed, so Beds/Cambs/Essex can use it.

Police Crime Commissioners will give some funding for private landowners to help towards removal.

Discussion around adverts on dustcarts and buses about fly-tipping. This is a good idea and promotional campaigns are needed. Taken on board that people aren't aware of their responsibilities and the need for education on how to dispose waste.

DB – would it be better to focus on name and shame instead?

JM – we have a zero tolerance and are taken to court, or they will be named and shamed.

Member of the public – asked if there is something more proactive that the council can do, such as lower rates for council to take waste away?

JM advised:

- it is a small minority that need proactively catching.
- if on universal credit, there is a reduced price on waste removal.
- there is no quick fix. Need to target people and focus on educating.

RM – highlighted that charges to dispose of DIY waste at household waste recycling centres were being removed. Would be good for the Council to monitor to see if it has an impact on fly-tipping.

The Community Safety Team are open to any further ideas from the public, email John.Marshall@north-herts.gov.uk

5. Proposed Car Parking Tariffs 2023

Cllr Ruth Brown gave presentation on the proposed Off-street, Car Parking Charges across North Herts, highlighting the areas of the report relevant for the area forum – Knebworth and Hitchin.

Concerns raised by Councillors and members of the public:

- to retain the ability to use cash and not to make it app only.
- to review the flat rate after 3pm.
- it was suggested to defer increase in charges for 12 months.
- request for data on car park usage since the pandemic and to put on MIS.
- to ensure Knebworth residents are involved in the consultation.

6. Open Discussion

Opened to questions from the floor about any of the agenda items or general questions or issues anyone wishes to raise.

Member of public – raised a question around issues of strimming footpaths in Pirton that could damage re-greening efforts by Wild about Pirton. Will discuss further with Community Partnerships Officer afterwards.

7. Topics for future Southern Rural Forums

Cllr Ralph Muncer – suggested the Luton Airport Expansion, to hear views of residents.

Meeting closed 9.33pm