

REPORT (FOR RECOMMENDATION & NOTING BY COMMUNITY FORUM)

**SOUTHERN RURAL COMMUNITY FORUM
DATE 12 DECEMBER 2024**

***PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT**

SERVICE DIRECTORATE: LEGAL & COMMUNITY

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 To advise the Community Forum on the current expenditure and balances of the Community Grant budget.
- 1.2 To bring to the Forum's attention details of recent requests received for Community grant funding, made by community groups and local organisations.
- 1.3 To enable Forum Members to make recommendations to the Executive Member for Community & Partnerships on grant applications.
- 1.4 To advise the Forum of the activities and schemes with which Community & Partnerships officers have been involved in and some important community-based activities that will take place during the next few months.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

THAT THE COMMUNITY FORUM:

- 2.1 Considers and notes the information within this report.
- 2.2 Makes recommendations to the Executive Member for Community & Partnerships on the grant applications detailed below.
- 2.3 Cassel Hall Trust - **£2,000** towards the replacement of the boiler at Cassel Memorial Hall.
- 2.4 Hitchin Town Youth FC - **£700** towards two sets of goal posts.
- 2.5 Pirton JoyCare - **£870** towards the running costs of their services supporting the older people in the community.
- 2.6 Preston Parish Council - **£594** towards an external defibrillator cabinet, fitted onto the Pavilion.
- 2.7 The Living Theatre Whitwell CIO - **£2,435** towards the running of an outdoor art trail project.

3. BACKGROUND/ RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1 The Community Grant budget for Southern Rural Community Forum 2024/25 is **£16,555**.
- 3.2 Community grant payments totalling **£6,026** have been made to date, as itemised in Appendix 1.

- 3.3 The remaining budget available for community grants for the Southern Rural area for 2024/25 therefore stands at **£10,529**.

4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Following the decision of Full Council on 18 April 2023, a Community Forum shall consider applications for community grants in its area and make recommendations to the Executive Member for Community & Partnerships on them. The Executive Member has delegated authority to make these Executive decisions under section 14.6.8(b)((ii)A 5 of the constitution, in consultation with the Service Director: Legal & Community. That decision will be subject to a 5 clear working day call-in period, following publication in the Members Information Service (MIS) and on the Council's website.

- 4.2 Other issues raised in this report are for information and noting and therefore no direct legal implications arise.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 As outlined in Appendix 1 and under item 3.3 the remaining Community Grant budget available is **£10,529**.

- 5.2 The total amount of funding requested for this meeting is **£6,599**.

- 5.3 If the applications outlined in Appendices 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 are recommended by the Forum and subsequently approved by the Executive Member for Community & Partnerships, there would be **£3,930** available for Community Grants for the remainder of the 2024-2025 financial year.

6. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Good risk management supports and enhances the decision-making process, increasing the likelihood of the Council meeting its objectives and enabling it to respond quickly and effectively to change. When taking decisions, risks and opportunities must be considered.

- 6.2 There are no relevant risk entries that have been recorded on Ideagen Risk Management, 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.

7. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 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.

- 7.2 Community Grant funds are 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.

8. SOCIAL VALUE IMPLICATIONS

8.1 The Social Value Act and “go local” policy do not apply to the matters contained within this report, as there are no recommendations on procurement.

9. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 In relation to the Cassel Hall Trust application, Appendix 2, alternatives such as Solar panels and air source heat pumps have been considered but are not currently a cost effective option to provide heat and power to the hall. The hall is also located in an off-gas area meaning an oil boiler is the only other option. The replacement boiler will be more energy efficient than the previous and will help with cost savings for the hall. The hall is also used as a warm hub for the community, so heating for the hall is essential to help those in need of warm spaces.

10. HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

10. The activities of the Community & Partnerships team are covered by existing budgets.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

11.1 Terms of Reference for Community Forums, Section 9 of the Council Constitution updated April 2024.

11.2 Community Grants Criteria Policy May 2023.

12. APPENDICES

12.1 Appendix 1. Southern Rural Community Grant Budget 24-25

12.2 Appendix 2. Cassel Hall Trust

12.3 Appendix 3. Hitchin Town Youth FC

12.4 Appendix 4. Pirton JoyCare

12.5 Appendix 5. Preston Parish Council

12.6 Appendix 6. The Living Theatre Whitwell CIO

12.3 Appendix 7. Community Updates

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