

REPORT (FOR RECOMMENDATION & NOTING BY COMMUNITY FORUM)

SOUTHERN RURAL COMMUNITY FORUM DATE 10 SEPTEMBER 2026

***PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT**

SERVICE DIRECTORATE: GOVERNANCE

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 Governance, 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 Governance on the grant applications detailed below.
- 2.3 Graveley Village Hall - **£3,000** towards installing an air-conditioning unit in the village hall.
- 2.4 Kings Walden Parish Council - **£650** towards the removal of an existing tree and planting a permanent Christmas tree for future village events.
- 2.5 Lilley Parish Council - **£650** towards planting a permanent Christmas tree for future village events.

3. BACKGROUND/ RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1 The Community Grant budget for Southern Rural Community Forum 2026/27 is **£17,310**.
- 3.2 Community grant payments totalling **£3,858** 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 2026/27 therefore stands at **£13,452**.

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 Governance on them. The Executive Member has delegated authority to make these Executive decisions under section 14.6.9(b)(iii)A of the constitution, in consultation with the Service Director: Governance. That decision will be subject to a 5 clear working day call-in period, following publication in the Members Information Bulletin (MIB) and on the Council's website.
- 4.2 The Terms of Reference of the Community Forum can be found in Section 9 of the constitution which states that the forum will '*consider and act as an advisory body to the relevant Executive Member responsible for grants who approves these (in consultation with the relevant Director)*'.
- 4.3 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 Community Grant budget available is **£13,452**.
- 5.2 The total amount of funding requested for this meeting is **£4,300**.
- 5.3 If the applications outlined in Appendices 2, 3 and 4 are recommended by the Forum and subsequently approved by the Executive Member for Governance there would be **£9,152** available for Community Grants for the remainder of the 2026-2027 financial year.
- 5.4 The application outlined in Appendix 2 has been determined to be a subsidy under the Subsidy Control Act. Appendix 2 is a subsidy as there is a market for venue hire. The applicant has confirmed that the value of grants that they have and will receive means that the proposed payment can be treated as Minimal Financial Assistance (MFA) under the Act. The Council will ensure that it carries out the necessary steps for the payment to be treated as MFA, but ultimate responsibility is with the applicant.

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 There are environmental implications associated with Appendix 2, allowing the site to adapt to the impacts of rising temperatures and the increasingly frequent heatwaves associated with climate change. This will ensure the building remains usable, safe and comfortable for community activities. In addition, it reduces the need for users to travel elsewhere to access similar services and activities. Though the installation of an air conditioning unit represents slightly increased energy usage, this is outweighed by the adaptation benefits outlined. To maximise the benefit of this air conditioned space, we will explore putting the site on Hertfordshire County Council's register of free cool spaces that any local resident can access.
- 9.2 Appendices 3 and 4 both have positive environmental impacts through the planting of permanent trees that will provide long-term ecological and community benefits, instead of purchasing a new cut tree each year. Whilst Appendix 3 involves the removal of an existing tree, this will be replaced with a new permanent tree that will continue to enhance the local environment and biodiversity over the long term.

10. HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 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 May 2024 [Council constitution | North Herts Council](#)
- 11.2 [Community Grants Criteria Policy March 2025](#)

12. APPENDICES

- 12.1 Appendix 1. Southern Rural Grant Budget 26-27
- 12.2 Appendix 2. Graveley Village Hall
- 12.3 Appendix 3. Kings Walden Parish Council
- 12.4 Appendix 4. Lilley Parish Council
- 12.5 Appendix 5. Community Updates

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