

**SOUTHERN RURAL COMMITTEE
6 JULY 2017**

***PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT**

AGENDA ITEM No.

7

TITLE OF REPORT: GRANTS & COMMUNITY UPDATE

REPORT OF THE STRATEGIC DIRECTOR OF FINANCE POLICY & GOVERNANCE

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 Whitwell Film Club - £1,000 as outlined below in 8.1.1
 - 2.1.2 Codicote Football Club - £675 as outlined below in 8.1.2
 - 2.1.3 Circles Café Bar CIC - £1,000 as outlined below in 8.1.3
 - 2.1.4 St Ippolyts United Football Club - £750 as outlined below in 8.1.4
 - 2.1.5 Codicote Local History Society - £300 as outlined below in 8.1.5
 - 2.1.6 Offley Village Hall - £300 as outlined below in 8.1.6
 - 2.1.7 Codicote Neighbourhood Planning Group - £500 as outlined below in 8.1.7

2.1.8 St Paul's Walden Mother & Toddler Group - £200 as outlined below in 8.1.8

2.2 That the Committee endorses the actions taken by the Communities Manager to promote greater community capacity and well-being for the Southern Rural Area of the District.

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 A Southern Rural Area Committee Budget Spread sheet, which relates to the end of year Area Committee budget balances for 2016/17 and the 2017/18 financial year Committee budget.

7.2 The spreadsheet also details pre-allocated sums carried forward from the previous financial years, including balances and past expenditure relating to the allocated and unallocated Area Visioning Budgets available to the Committee.

7.3 The current level of unallocated funds within the Committee's Development Budget for 2017/18 is **£10,600**

7.4 The current level of unallocated within the Committee's Ward Members 2017/18 Budget is **£4,950**

8. RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS

8.1 Grant Applications for Consideration

8.1.1 Whitwell Film Club

Volunteers within the village wish to develop a local film club similar to those in running in other villages within the District.

The initial funding required is to cover elements of the equipment below:-

NEC M403 H projector	£1,430
12 x 7ft front & rear projection screen	£2,798
2 x FBT speakers	£1,100
Sony Blu ray player	£89
Leads including XLR & Jack cables	£130

Total: £5547 + Vat Gross £6,656

The initiative has already attracted an anonymous grant of £2,500, a bequest of £1,000 plus a further £1,000 from Henry Smith.

The project team is therefore looking for around another £1,000 to help initiate the scheme, which has support from the Parish Council.

8.1.2 Codicote Football Club

As part of the on going enhancements and initiatives required to meet the ground grading conditions at its home facility, the Codicote Football Club has to provide some form of barrier between players and spectators which needs to run from the changing rooms to the pitch.

In addition, due to the proximity of the clubhouse to the Cricket Club's boundary, they also have to consider further safety aspects for spectators.

The Football Club has therefore researched the possibility of the installing a netting system which will hopefully assist both clubs.

The product the Club is looking to install is designed as a professional training system which can be easily dismantled before matches and ideal where permanent post sockets are not an option.

Each upright will need to be installed at 10m intervals and the Club estimates that 50m of netting & posts are required overall.

Costs are estimated to be in the region of £1,350 and the club seeking funding from the Area Committee to a level Members feel appropriate.

8.1.3 Circles Café Bar CIC

Following a number of operational issues in running the Café Bar, the management of the CIC has been reformed in order to take on a level of redirection in how the café functions and operates.

Following a number of initiatives and community activity days held over the last school half term holiday, business and throughput has improved. The CIC has also appointed a new Manager for the café and altered its opening hours and staffing arrangements, with the view of improving future sustainability.

The committee have further marketing and innovated schemes lined up for the forthcoming months, including a two week closure period over the summer holidays (usually operationally quieter than term time weeks) to refurbish & renovate the café ready for a further initiatives planned for the Autumn.

These include:-

- Improved local signage - Front of the shop & banner for the school gates
- Production & distribution of promotional flyers and literature
- Sourcing reusable branded cups & introduction of new lines ie Milkshakes

The CIC committee is seeking support funding from the Area Committee in the region of £1,000 to help with the costs relating to the refurbishment over the summer and to assist with future marketing and promotional initiatives.

8.1.4 **St Ippolyts United Football Club**

The Sunday side playing at the recreation ground each week, St Ippolyts United, is looking to start a reserve team for next season, 2017/18.

In essence this will be primarily a side based on local players coming from St Ippolyts and Preston. The club has identified a manager who is also a qualified grounds man which will be further beneficial to football in the village.

The club is seeking funding assistance to help cover start up fees involved in registering a new team with the local league & FA, plus other equipment & kits costs.

The club has calculated start up costs to be in the region of £1,500 to £1,800 for the initial season, with the majority the costs relating to the provision of kit and additional equipment.

The club is seeking funding from the Area Committee to a level Members feel appropriate.

8.1.5 **Codicote Local History Society** – Ward Grant Cllr Jane Gray

The Local History Society in Codicote is seeking funding support of £300 via the Codicote Ward Budget 2017/18 to construct a storage facility for the safe keeping of the donated artefacts to the village's Museum.

8.1.6 **Offley Village Hall** – Ward Grant Cllr Claire Strong

The Hall's Management Committee is to address enhancements to the existing kitchen facilities and is seeking support funding of £300 via the Hitchwood, Offa & Hoo Ward Budget 2016/17.

8.1.7 **Codicote Neighbourhood Planning Group** – Ward Grant Cllr Jane Gray

Codicote Parish Council has set up a Steering group to look at undertaking the development of a Neighbourhood Plan for the Parish. This group reports to the Parish Council on progress made.

The Parish believes that it is vital to raise awareness of the Neighbourhood Plan enabling local residents to voice their opinions so that these can be taken into account when the Plan is formally written.

Within the next year, it will be necessary to send out publicity fliers and produce posters to advertise village meetings, drop in sessions and raise awareness of questionnaires as part of the consultation process.

The group was awarded £500 by the Southern Rural Area Committee at its last meeting in March to cover the publicity requirements related to the consultation element of developing a neighbourhood plan.

Discussions at the meeting led to assigning a further £500 via the Codicote Ward Budget for 2016/17 to help support the group's undertakings over the next year.

- 8.1.8 **St Paul's Walden Mother & Toddler Group** – Ward Grant Cllrs Barnard & Faye Frost
The village's Mother & Toddler Group is seeking funding support of £200 via the Hitchwood, Offa & Hoo Ward Budget to help purchase new play and early learning equipment.

8.2 **Update on Community Engagement**

8.2.1 **UU's / s106 Contributions & Funding Advice**

The CM is liaising with a number of Parishes and rural groups re the potential unlocking of collected UU (Unilateral Undertakings) contributions held by the Authority and in cases assisting to compile evidence of need within each community re any current and future developments. These are subject to meeting relevant criteria set under regulation and by which the Authority must abide.

Current Parishes / groups seeking advice / support:

- **Offley & Cockernhoe PC** – Major enhancements to facilities at the Recreation Centre utilising £214k s106 developer contributions and improvements to facilities at the village hall.
- **Holwell Parish Council** – Advice & support re capital funding to renew the Cricket / Football Pavilion and potential application to the Authority's new Community Facilities Capital Projects Improvement Funding Scheme and assistance from NHH.
- **Pirton Parish Council** – Advice & support re UUs & s106 funding.
- **Pirton Village Hall** – Advice & support re capital funding to provide an additional room for rental, improvements to the kitchen facilities and better storage.
- **Knebworth Parish Council** – Advice & support re UUs & s106 funding re enhancements to play equipment at Lytton Fields.

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 The Terms of Reference in relation to Area Committees confirm that they may establish and maintain relationships with outside bodies/voluntary organisations which include discretionary grant aid/financial support but excluding grants for district-wide activities. The Committee has delegated powers, as a body, 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.

11. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 There are no relevant risk entries that have been recorded on Covalent, 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 The Equality Act 2010 came into force on the 1st October 2010, a major piece of legislation. The Act also created a new Public Sector Equality Duty, which came into force on the 5th April 2011. There is a General duty, described in 12.2, that public bodies must meet, underpinned by more specific duties which are designed to help meet them.
- 12.2 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, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- 12.3 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 A –Southern Rural Area Committee Budget Sheet

15.2 Appendix B - Grant Form for Whitwell Film Club

15.3 Appendix C – Grant Form for Codicote Football Club

15.4 Appendix D – Grant Form for Circles Café Bar CIC

15.5 Appendix E – Grant Form for St Ippolyts United Football Club

15.6 Appendix F – Ward Grant Form for Codicote Local History Society

15.7 Appendix G – Ward Grant Form for Offley Village Hall

15.8 Appendix H – Ward Grant Form for Codicote Neighbourhood Planning Group

15.9 Appendix I – Ward Grant Form for St Paul’s Walden Mother & Toddler Group

16. CONTACT OFFICERS

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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 Grants Policy Report to Cabinet June 2016.