

**NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL
SOUTHERN RURAL COMMITTEE
(Cadwell, Chesfield, Codicote, Hitchwood, Offa & Hoo,
Kimpton and Knebworth Wards)**

**Minutes of the meeting held at Foundation House,
Icknield Road, Letchworth Garden City
on Thursday 2 March 2017
at 7.30 p.m.**

MINUTES

PRESENT: *Councillors David Barnard (Chairman), Cathryn Henry (Vice-Chairman), John Bishop, Faye Frost, Jane Gray, Mrs C.P.A. Strong and Terry Tyler.*

IN ATTENDANCE: *Simon Ellis (Development and Conservation Manager), Stuart Izzard (Communities Manager) and Hilary Dineen (Committee and Member Services Officer).*

ALSO PRESENT: *At the commencement of the meeting 21 members of the public.*

51. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Steve Hemingway and Harry Spencer-Smith.

52. MINUTES – 1 DECEMBER 2016

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 1 December 2016 be confirmed as a true record of the proceedings and be signed by the Chairman.

53. NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS

There were no notifications of other business.

54. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

- (1) The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting, particularly Councillor Needham and those giving a presentation;
- (2) The Chairman reminded everyone that, in accordance with Council policy, the meeting was being audio recorded;
- (3) Members were reminded that any declarations of interest in respect of any business set out in the agenda, should be declared as either a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest or Declarable Interest and are required to notify the Chairman of the nature of any interest declared at the commencement of the relevant item on the agenda. Members declaring a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest must withdraw from the meeting for the duration of the item. Members declaring a Declarable Interest which requires they leave the room under Paragraph 7.4 of the Code of Conduct, can speak on the item, but must leave the room before the debate and vote.

55. HERTFORDSHIRE CONSTABULARY

Sergeant Steve Oliphant (Hertfordshire Constabulary) thanked the Chairman for the opportunity to address the Committee and gave a verbal update on the issues being addressed by the Hertfordshire Constabulary in the Southern Rural area.

Sergeant Oliphant gave the apologies of Chief Inspector Julie Wheatley, who was unable to attend this meeting.

In respect of Officers working in the area, he advised that Inspector Duncan Sales and PC Chris Suckling had retired and their replacements were Inspector Richard Lilley and PC David Hine. PCs Keith Harding and Matt Jenkins and PCSOs Heather Burrows and Michelle Trussell remained in the Southern Rural area.

In the summer of 2016 they were faced with the challenge of supporting farmers and game keepers in the rural area to tackle an unprecedented increase in people, travelling from outside of the area, targeting rural communities. An operation was put in place involving most Officers which dealt with in excess of 100 reports to the police which resulted in 21 recorded crimes and 10 arrests for criminal damage, burglary and theft of game. Some of these people remained on bail whilst investigations continued.

Farmers and gamekeepers were invited to attend a meeting at the end of August 2016 to discuss their issues and concerns, communication had continued and this had helped demonstrate that the Police would take reports seriously and respond to them.

Crime Statistics

In 2016/17 there had been 884 crimes reported (778 for 2015/16) which was an increase of 106 crimes. This figure included low level theft, criminal damage, burglaries to houses and barns and theft from motor vehicles as well as other crimes.

Dwelling Burglary

This probably had the most impact on victims. There had been 51 reports in 2016/17 (32 in 2015/16) which was a significant increase.

The increase had been a recent feature, where more isolated houses and rural hamlets had been targeted. There was a pro-active unit that reviewed each report every day and considered any intelligence that could help.

Burglary Other

This involved burglaries from garages, sheds and lock-ups. There had been 317 reports in 2016/17 (267 in 2015/16).

Criminal Damage

This included vehicles being driven over farmland and damaging crops. There had been 138 report in 2016/17 (122in 2015/16).

Environmental Crime

There had been 15 recorded offences in 2016/17. Fly tipping was not recorded as a crime by the Police, but was reported to the Council and a lot of work had been undertaken, in partnership with the NHDC Enforcement Officers, resulting in a number of operations targeting hotspot areas for fly tipping. The Police had also been working with the Environment Agency Action Team to tackle issues in the rural areas.

OWL & Other Communications

This was a very worthwhile system that provided updated to users, including details of vehicle issues, offenders and up to date security information. This system could also be used to contact the Police.

He would recommend that people sign up to this messaging system and that any suspicious activity or concerns are reported to the Police via OWL or 101.

Recent stills of burglary offenders had been circulated on the Police Twitter Account and it was believed that these people were responsible for the majority of the crimes.

Members asked what use had been made of the quad bikes purchased with grant funding from this Committee.

Sergeant Oliphant advised that one quad bike was stationed at Hitchin and had been used occasionally, although not as much as he would like. This was partly due to training of drivers and there was a bid for training another five Officers, there was another based in Royston that was used a little more often. The quad bikes had not proved to be the most useful pieces of equipment for the types of crime being tackled.

Members noted that one of the quad bikes was based at Hitchin Police Station and queried whether it would be useful to make an arrangement for it to be stored at a local farm, where it would be more accessible for use in the Southern Rural community.

Sergeant Oliphant stated that it would be very helpful to have the quad bike stored more locally and agreed to look into the possibilities of doing this.

Members commented that public perception of the Police in rural areas was positive, particularly following the week of overnight activity that was noticed and appreciated.

Sergeant Oliphant advised that the more confident that people were in the Police, the more likely they were to report crime and this could cause an increase in crime numbers. He cautioned against people not reporting crime as there could not deal with issues that they were unaware of.

Members asked for feedback on the initiative introduced some time ago to use horse riders to report any incidents and concerns and suggested that this should be more highly publicised.

Sergeant Oliphant advised that the horse rider initiative was operated by the Rural Operational Support Team at Police Headquarters and therefore he was unable to give any feedback on its success in the Southern Rural Area, however he would include this in his next report.

A Member expressed concern that there was a lack of a police presence in the village communities and that crime levels had increased.

It was suggested that the next meeting for the farming community not be held in August, which was a very busy time for them.

Sergeant Oliphant advised that the timing of the meeting last August was entirely in response to the increase in crime at that time and that he had discussed increasing visibility at village events.

Members noted that it was sometimes difficult to report rural crime as the police control room asked for the address where the offence is being committed and this could be the middle of a field.

Sergeant Oliphant advised that the reporting of crime was through a control room where officers may not have local knowledge. He stated that he would discuss this issue with the control room and ask them to put this type of call through to local officers.

The Chairman thanked Sergeant Oliphant for his presentation and for the work he and his team undertook in the Southern Rural area.

RESOLVED: That the Committee and Member Services Officer be requested to forward the crime statistics received from Sergeant Oliphant to all Members of this Committee via email.

56. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – GRAVELEY VILLAGE HALL

Mrs Sal Jarvis, Graveley Village Hall, thanked the Chairman for the opportunity to address the Committee and gave a verbal presentation in support of the application for grant funding.

Mrs Jarvis informed Members that the Graveley Village Hall Trust was set up in 1927 and that the hall was for the benefit of the residents.

The hall was accessed by an extensive flight of concrete steps with a drop on both sides and was used by groups that included children and older people.

The Trust wished to install railings from the top of the steps to the bottom in order to prevent falls.

An application had been made to Graveley Parish Council for matched funding of £500, a decision regarding this request was awaited, and the Trust would cover the remaining cost.

Members asked whether there were any plans to install a ramp, what the Trustees used their monies for and whether the project could be completed if the full amount requested was not granted.

Mrs Jarvis advised that the disabled access was at the rear of the building, that the monies held by the Trustees was used for general maintenance of the hall and that, if there was a substantial shortfall in grant funding, the project would have to be on hold.

The Chairman thanked Mrs Jarvis for her presentation.

57. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – CODICOTE FOOTBALL CLUB

The Communities Manager informed Members that the application for grant funding for Codicote Football Club had been withdrawn.

58. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – BREACHWOOD GREEN CRICKET CLUB

Mr Tim Hughes and Mr Jon Hall, Breachwood Green Cricket Club, thanked the Chairman for the opportunity to address the Committee and gave a verbal presentation in support of the application for grant funding.

Mr Hall informed Members that Breachwood Green Cricket Club served a village of 650 residents at the heart of which was the cricket ground. The Club was formed in 1985 with all of the players/members living locally.

The Club was active in the community and was involved in the annual BBQ and Fete as well as a 6 a side tournament in the summer.

Some members had played since 1985 and it was now important to attract younger members and to this end they had sought to forge links with the local school.

They wished to purchase practice nets which would give the club visibility, enable practice for 9 months of the year and support the wish to encourage younger members as well as encouraging greater health and wellbeing by partaking in an active sport.

The club welcomed all comers to join at the lower membership fee of £5 per annum, which had been set at this level to encourage new members.

Members asked whether they had applied for funding from any other organisations and whether they had received funding for any other projects.

Mr Hughes advised that this was their first foray into grant funding.

Members urged all applicants to talk to the Communities Team about available funding streams.

Members asked how many teams played at the ground, how many people were members of the Club and how many spectators came to games

Mr Hall advised that they played one team, had 25 members and approximately 15 people came to watch them play.

The Chairman thanked Mr Hughes and Mr Hall for their presentation.

59. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – WITHIN THE WALLS GARDEN PROJECT

Ms Lea Ellis and Ms Carolyn Langley, Within the Walls Garden Project, thanked the Chairman for the opportunity to address the Committee and gave a verbal presentation in support of the application for grant funding.

Ms Langley informed Members that they had found a one acre piece of land in Kings Walden which had been a walled garden and that it had listed walls.

They wished for the land to become a community scheme for people of all ages to come to grow vegetables and enjoy the space.

The scheme would encourage children's self-esteem and confidence and allow them space to play in a natural environment. The plan was to use Forest School activities such as camp fires to achieve this.

They currently had a toddler group that enjoyed playing in the mud and with the wooden cooker that had been built and Guide companies from Hitchin had visited.

The only amenities on the land were a tap and a compost toilet and they were looking to build more toilets. There was also a greenhouse, being used as an office and a shed.

They needed some further shelter and wanted a structure that wasn't permanent, but that could be left in place and therefore the application was for grant funding towards the cost of a yurt.

The yurt would act as a base and somewhere to meet, although most of the time would be spend outside.

Members asked whether a yurt would require planning permission

Ms Ellis advised that this did not require planning permission as it was a temporary structure.

Members queried whether they had invited any of the local primary schools to take part in the project and whether these schools would be charged

Ms Ellis advised that they had already contacted the local schools as well as those in Letchworth and Hitchin. They were also undertaking outreach work by taking young people to schools to do gardening. They made a charge to the schools as they had to pay bills such as water

Members asked how much they had raised so far towards the project and whether funds received were used to pay wages, if so how many were paid staff

Ms Ellis advised that they had received funding from Tesco's for raised beds and were awaiting the results of grant applications. Funds received were used to pay the wages of one full time and one part time employee and to fund projects. This was a Community Interest Company that would not charge for every activity.

Members asked what was the expected life of the yurt and whether they had insurance

Ms Ellis advised that the yurt was expected to last between 10 to 15 years and that they had all the relevant insurance needed.

The Chairman thanked Ms Ellis and Ms Langley for their presentation.

60. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – KIMPTON FOLK FESTIVAL

Mr John Rowlands, Kimpton Folk Festival, thanked the Chairman for the opportunity to address the Committee and gave a verbal presentation in support of the application for grant funding.

Mr Rowlands informed Members that he was part of the organising committee and was a Trustee.

Last year's event was the first and it came about from musicians playing together. It was held over an afternoon and evening and was part funded by a grant from this Committee.

The second Kimpton Folk Festival would be a free event with various workshops and would include up to three school choirs.

Members asked whether the expenditure listed in the agenda was based on last year's figures, how many tickets were sold last year and what the fees for the Memorial Hall were for.

Mr Rowlands advised that the figures listed in the paperwork were projections based on last year's figures plus things they had missed. They sold 400 tickets last year, but were expecting many more this year. The Memorial Hall was used for some of the performances.

Members noted that ticket sales did not meet expectation last year and that the event had to be scaled down and that ticket sales for this year would be unlikely to exceed £6,000 yet expenditure was estimated to be £14,000.

They queried how they intended to make the event sustainable for the future and how they would scale down this year's event if ticket sales did not meet expectations.

Mr Rowlands advised that they made a profit last year, but only because of the grant funding, one idea to make the event sustainable was to have a whole weekend festival. They had no plans to scale back this year's event as they had applied to other organisations for grant funding.

Members queried how they would advertise the event and suggested that they sell advertising space on their website and in their programmes

The Chairman thanked Mr Rowlands for his presentation.

61. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – ICKLEFORD VILLAGE HALL PRE - SCHOOL

Ms Laura Reader, Leader and Ms Lucy Barnes, Deputy Leader thanked the Chairman for the opportunity to address the Committee and gave a verbal presentation in support of the application for grant funding for Ickleford Village Hall Pre-School,

Ms Reader informed Members that the Pre-School had been given the opportunity to have their own entrance in the Village Hall.

The main entrance to the hall went directly onto a main road and the doors to the side entrance were not surviving the constant use by the pre-school and this door was designated as a fire door, which should not be used to access the play ground.

The Communities Manager advised that the project was for a new entrance that would give access to the play ground.

Members noted that the Village Hall had received Section 106 funding to replace the boiler and commented on the application being received from the pre-school for work to the village hall.

The Chairman thanked Ms Reader and Ms Barnes for their presentation.

62. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – CODICOTE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING FORUM

The Communities Manager advised that Ms Helena Gregory, Codicote Neighbourhood Planning Forum, had given her apologies that, due to ill health, she was unable to attend this meeting.

63. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – PRESTON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN GROUP

Mrs Margaret Trinder, Preston Neighbourhood Plan Group, thanked the Chairman for the opportunity to address the Committee and gave a verbal presentation in support of the application for grant funding.

Mrs Trinder informed Members that Preston was a small parish consisting of 420 residents and that the Parish Council had set up a steering group to develop a Neighbourhood Plan.

It was important to raise awareness as next year they would need to send out papers regarding consultation.

Economies of scale meant that this sort of project was expensive for small villages

Members queried whether there were funds set aside for Neighbourhood Plans.

The Communities Manager advised that there were funds available for Neighbourhood Plans, but that NHDC had supported planning groups during the mapping and consultation stages of the process. This Committee had previously been very generous to such groups.

The Chairman thanked Mrs Trinder for her presentation.

64. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – ST IPPOLYTS VILLAGE HALL

Prior to the item being discussed Councillor Mrs C.P.A Strong declared a declarable interest as she was the NHDC representative on the Hitchin Town Twinning Association that would be using this venue. She stated that this interest would not prevent her from taking part in the debate and vote.

Mr Michael Fisher, Honorary Treasurer and Mrs Pam Skeggs, Honorary Secretary, thanked the Chairman for the opportunity to address the Committee and gave a verbal presentation in support of the application for grant funding for St Ippolyts Village Hall.

Mr Fisher informed Members that this was a typical village hall that provided facilities for local groups such as the Brownies and one off events for organisations such as Hitchin Town Twinning Association.

The hall was fully booked on weekday evenings, but they needed to encourage day time and weekend use.

The 20 year old dishwasher in the hall had broken down and a much needed replacement had been identified.

Members noted that groups were charged extra for use of the dishwasher and asked what had happened to these funds and how long they would expect an industrial grade dishwasher to last.

Mrs Skeggs advised that they did not charge charitable groups for use of the dishwasher and did not wish to charge any group in the future

Mr Fisher advised that they would hope that the new dishwasher would last 10 years.

The Chairman thanked Mr Fisher and Mrs Skeggs for their presentation.

65. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – KNEBORTH COMMUNITY CHORUS

Mr Derek Harrison, Musical Director of Knebworth Village Chorus, thanked the Chairman for the opportunity to address the Committee and gave a verbal presentation in support of the application for grant funding.

Mr Harrison informed Members that the chorus was initially funded through the Knebworth Festival, but they were now an independent group.

The Chorus had 50 members and often invited children to join them, with the majority being from Knebworth and the audiences for their concerts usually numbering 100.

The Chorus provided two main events being summer and Christmas concerts, they also performed at events held at Knebworth House.

They used a keyboard for both concerts and rehearsals and had so far managed to borrow one when needed.

The aim was to purchase a keyboard, amp, carry case and cable and mic package, all of which would be in use for a long time.

The estimated cost of the equipment was £1,806 and they had received grant funding from Knebworth Village Trust for £1,000.

Members asked for clarification of income

The Communities Manager advised that the annual income was approximately £3,600 and the expenditure £2,500.

Mr Harrison advised that they were expecting to have to start paying for venues in the future.

The Chairman thanked Mr Harrison for his presentation.

66. COMMUNITY UPDATE AND GRANT APPLICATIONS

The Communities Manager presented the report of the Strategic Director of Finance Policy and Governance and drew attention to the following:

Budgets

The current level of unallocated funds within the 2016/17 Development Budget was £6,756 and in the 2016/17 Ward Members Budget was £5,000.

If all of the grants applied for this evening were granted the full amount there would be an overspend of £300.

Ward Grant Applications

Two further Ward Grant applications were being processed and would be referred to the next meeting of this Committee as follows:

- 1 Offley Village Hall
£300 from the Hitchwood, Offa and Hoo Ward budget to enhance the kitchen
- 2 St Pauls Walden;
£200 from the Hitchwood, Offa and Hoo Ward budget to purchase further equipment for the Mothers and Toddlers group.

Section 106 and Unilateral Undertakings Contributions and Funding Advice

The Communities Manager advised that he was working with planning colleagues to identify projects that would qualify for Section 106 and Unilateral Undertakings funding.

The Communities Team was constantly helping organisations to find other funding sources.

The Chairman commented that much of the work regarding funding for organisations would be about identifying other funding sources and supporting the groups to make applications.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the activities and schemes with which the Communities Manager has been involved with, as set out in the report, be noted;
- (2) That the budgetary expenditure, balances and carry forwards within the Area Committee Development Budget spreadsheet, as attached at Appendix 1 to the report, be noted.

REASON FOR DECISION: To ensure that the Southern Rural Committee is kept informed of the work of the Communities Manager and to inform Members of the financial resources and current budgetary position.

67. GRANT APPLICATION – GRAVELEY VILLAGE HALL

The Communities Manager reminded Members that Graveley Village Hall wished to put railings down the sides of the steep concrete steps and that Graveley Parish Council had been asked for £500 match funding.

Councillor Henry advised that she wished to award £300 from her Chesfield Budget in addition to any funding awarded from the Discretionary Budget.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That grant funding of £1,000 be awarded to Graveley Village Hall from the 2016/17 Discretionary Budget towards the costs associated with the installation of safety railings to the Hall's entrance steps;
- (2) That grant funding of £300 be awarded to Graveley Village Hall from Councillor Henry's Chesfield Ward Budget towards the costs associated with the installation of safety railing to the Hall's entrance steps.

REASON FOR DECISION: To improve services provided by local organisations and groups which are accessed by the community.

68. GRANT APPLICATION – CODICOTE FOOTBALL CLUB

The Communities Officer advised Members that Codicote Football Club had withdrawn their application for grant funding.

69. GRANT APPLICATION – BREACHWOOD GREEN CRICKET CLUB

Members wished to encourage Breachwood Green Cricket Club to apply for funding from other sources.

RESOLVED: That grant funding of £800 be awarded to Breachwood Green Cricket Club from the 2016/17 Discretionary Budget towards the cost of providing a mobile practice cage.

REASON FOR DECISION: To improve services provided by local organisations and groups which are accessed by the community.

70. GRANT APPLICATION – WITHIN THE WALLS GARDEN PROJECT

The Communities Manager informed Members that he had visited the project in December and that this was a Community Interest Company.

Members were very supportive of the project, but were concerned that detailed enquiries be made of regarding planning requirements regarding the placement of the yurt and that any funding be dependent on planning requirements being met.

RESOLVED: That, subject to confirmation from NHDC Planning Officers that Planning Permission is not required or planning permission being granted, grant funding of £1,656 be awarded to the Within The Walls Garden Project from the 2016/17 Discretionary Budget towards the cost of providing an outside shelter.

REASON FOR DECISION: To improve services provided by local organisations and groups which are accessed by the community.

71. GRANT APPLICATION – KIMPTON FOLK FESTIVAL

The Communities Manager reminded Members that this would be the second Kimpton Folk Festival run by a formidable team of people.

They were asking for grant funding of £1,500.

Members were concerned that grant funding was being sought again following a significant grant award last year. They also expressed concern that the event was too reliant on grant funding, which, in line with the Grants Policy would not be available to them from this Committee next year.

Members reiterated the need for the event to become sustainable

It was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED: That grant funding of £1,000 be awarded to Kimpton Folk Festival from the 2016/17 Discretionary Budget towards the cost of running the 2017 event.

REASON FOR DECISION: To improve services provided by local organisations and groups which are accessed by the community.

72. GRANT APPLICATION – ICKLEFORD VILLAGE HALL

The Communities Manager advised that the Pre-School was currently using the designated fire doors to access their play ground every day and that the aim was to provide a specific entrance for this purpose.

Councillor Spencer-Smith advised that he wished to award £500 from his Cadwell Budget in addition to any funding awarded from the Discretionary Budget.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That grant funding of £600 be awarded to Ickleford Village Hall Pre-School from the 2016/17 Discretionary Budget towards the cost of installing a new external door opening onto the pre-school play area;
- (2) That grant funding of £500 be awarded to Ickleford Village Hall Pre-School from Councillor Spencer-Smith's Cadwell Ward Budget towards the cost of installing a new external door opening onto the pre-school play area.

REASON FOR DECISION: To improve services provided by local organisations and groups which are accessed by the community.

73. GRANT APPLICATION – CODICOTE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING FORUM

RESOLVED: That grant funding of £500 be awarded to Codicote Neighbourhood Planning Forum from the 2016/17 Discretionary Budget towards the costs associated with the consultation stage of developing a Neighbourhood Plan for the village.

REASON FOR DECISION: To improve services provided by local organisations and groups which are accessed by the community.

74. GRANT APPLICATION – PRESTON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN GROUP

RESOLVED: That grant funding of £400 be awarded to Preston Neighbourhood Plan Group from the 2016/17 Discretionary Budget towards the costs associated with the consultation stage of developing a Neighbourhood Plan for the village.

REASON FOR DECISION: To improve services provided by local organisations and groups which are accessed by the community.

75. GRANT APPLICATION – ST IPPOLYTS VILLAGE HALL

Prior to the item being discussed Councillor Mrs C.P.A strong declared a declarable interest as she was the NHDC representative on the Hitchin Town Twinning Association, that would be using this venue. She stated that this interest would not prevent her from taking part in the debate and vote.

RESOLVED: That grant funding of £600 be awarded to St Ippolyts Village Hall from the 2016/17 Discretionary Budget towards the cost of replacing the commercial grade dishwasher in the Hall.

REASON FOR DECISION: To improve services provided by local organisations and groups which are accessed by the community.

76. GRANT APPLICATION – KNEBORTH COMMUNITY CHORUS

RESOLVED:

- (1) That grant funding of £300 be awarded to Knebworth Community Chorus from the 2016/17 Discretionary Budget towards the cost of providing new musical equipment and instruments;
- (2) That grant funding of £500 be awarded to Knebworth Community Chorus from Councillor Hemingway's Knebworth Ward Budget towards the cost of providing new musical equipment and instruments.

REASON FOR DECISION: To improve services provided by local organisations and groups which are accessed by the community.

77. WARD GRANT APPLICATION – OFFLEY TENNIS CLUB

The Communities Manager advised that approximately £250,000 of Section 106 funding had been released to Parish Councils to improve sports facilities at Offley Recreation Ground

One of the projects funded by this funding was the enhancement of Offley tennis courts and as a result of the improvement a tennis club was being set up.

Members were advised that original Offley Tennis Club had all but petered out, but there were new people involved who were working to revitalise the Club and offer children after school coaching.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That grant funding of £250 be awarded to Offley Tennis Club from Councillor Barnard's Hitchwood, Offa and Hoo Ward Budget towards set up costs for this new club;
- (2) That grant funding of £250 be awarded to Offley Tennis Club from Councillor Frost's Hitchwood, Offa and Hoo Ward Budget towards set up costs for this new club.

REASON FOR DECISION: To improve services provided by local organisations and groups which are accessed by the community.

78. WARD GRANT APPLICATION – KIMPTON MAY FESTIVAL

The Communities Manager advised that the May Festival group were seeking to improve storage for the May Festival equipment and were requesting a Ward Grant of £500.

Members were supportive of the project but expressed concern that groups appeared to be circumventing the new Grants Policy rules by applying for funding that would go to another organisation who wished to protect their future position and questioned whether the grants policy was as fit for purpose as it should be.

RESOLVED: That grant funding of £500 be awarded to Kimpton May Festival from Councillor Bishop's Kimpton Budget towards the cost of refurbishing the external storage unit at Kimpton Rugby Club used for storage of May Festival equipment.

REASON FOR DECISION: To improve services provided by local organisations and groups which are accessed by the community.

79. WARD GRANT APPLICATION – STRAWBERRY FIELDS CHILDREN'S CENTRE

The Communities Manager advised that the Strawberry Fields Children's Centre ran activities for a number of groups.

They were applying for funding to undertake a touring programme of training regarding road safety to pre-schools.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That grant funding of £200 be awarded to Strawberry Fields Children's Centre from Councillor Tyler's Chesfield Ward Budget towards the cost of delivering road safety training/awareness for 5 year olds;
- (2) That grant funding of £200 be awarded to Strawberry Fields Children's Centre from Councillor Henry's Chesfield Ward Budget towards the cost of delivering road safety training/awareness for 5 year olds.

REASON FOR DECISION: To improve services provided by local organisations and groups which are accessed by the community.

- 80. WARD GRANT APPLICATION – ST PAULS WALDEN LITTER PICKING SCHEME**
The Communities Manager advised that this was a group of volunteers who were seeking £200 to purchase litter pickers to enable them to clear up litter around Kings Walden.

This was not a constituted group therefore the NHDC Waste Team would be asked to purchase the litter pickers on their behalf.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That grant funding of £100 be awarded to St Pauls Walden Litter Picking Scheme from Councillor Barnard's Hitchwood, Offa and Hoo Ward Budget towards the cost of purchasing litter pickers for use by the community group;
- (2) That grant funding of £100 be awarded to St Pauls Walden Litter Picking Scheme from Councillor Frost's Hitchwood, Offa and Hoo Ward Budget towards the cost of purchasing litter pickers for use by the community group.
- (3) That the NHDC Waste Team be requested to purchase litter pickers to the value of £200 on behalf of the St Paul's Litter Picking Scheme.

REASON FOR DECISION: To improve services provided by local organisations and groups which are accessed by the community.

- 81. WARD GRANT APPLICATION – KNEBWORTH TWINNING ASSOCIATION**
The Communities Manager informed Members that the grant application from Knebworth Twinning Association had been withdrawn.

- 82. WARD GRANT APPLICATION – HEXTON COMMUNITY PETANQUE PROJECT**
The Communities Manager advised that this was a community group wishing to play Petanque and that the grant application was for funding towards setting up a pitch and increasing interest in the game.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That grant funding of £100 be awarded to Hexton Community Petanque Project from Councillor Barnard's Hitchwood, Offa and Hoo Ward Budget towards the cost of developing a petanque playing area;
- (2) That grant funding of £100 be awarded to Hexton Community Petanque Project from Councillor Frost's Hitchwood, Offa and Hoo Ward Budget towards the cost of developing a petanque playing area;
- (3) That grant funding of £200 be awarded to Hexton Community Petanque Project from Councillor Strong's Hitchwood, Offa and Hoo Ward Budget towards the cost of developing a petanque playing area.

REASON FOR DECISION: To improve services provided by local organisations and groups which are accessed by the community.

- 83. SECTION 106 AND UNILATERAL UNDERTAKINGS**
The Development and Conservation Manager presented the report entitled Section 106 and Unilateral Undertakings.

He advised Members that there were two corrections to the report being that:

1. Due to a drafting error, Paragraphs 8.4.5, 8.4.6 and 8.4.7 should be deleted from the report.
2. The Paragraph numbers referred to in Paragraph 8 should be amended to Paragraphs 2.2 and 2.3.

The Development and Conservation Manager advised that the tables appended to the report only included money received and did not list anticipated receipts as there could be no guarantee they would ever be received.

The nature of Section 106 funding had changed over recent years and continued to do so.

The tariff approach whereby we could collect monies from small scale developments and spend it cumulatively on projects that fell within a general category was over. This was largely as a result of the pooling limit imposed on Section 106 funds from April 2015 and the banning of Section 106 funding for schemes of 10 dwellings or less.

Most, if not all, of the money collected over the coming years from Section 106 funding would already have a specific project already identified within the associated planning obligation resulting in the discretionary element diminishing over the next few years.

The successful system of allocating available funds to relevant projects to where those funds remained available and updating Area Committee's on an annual basis would be continued.

He drew attention to Paragraph 8.1.3 of the report and advised that the government had confirmed that a review of the Community Infrastructure Levy would be announced in Autumn 2017.

It appeared that this was likely to allow Local Authorities to set standard and very low Community Infrastructure Levy tariffs without the need to go through a Local Plan examination process and then rely on the existing Section 106 system on top of that, although there is no certainty of this.

Future Community Infrastructure Levy governance and spending would require an entirely new decision making process as to how money was allocated.

Members commented that it was important for Parish Councils to identify projects that could be funded by Section 106 contributions, even if they were opposed to the development taking place as, if the development was granted planning permission they could not identify projects at a later date. Parishes need to understand that seeking Section 106 contributions from a development did not alter their right to make objections to the development itself.

Members queried what happened to unspent Section 106 contributions and asked how monies could be protected if there were no projects coming forward.

The Development and Conservation Manager advised that monies collected had to be spent on a specific project and that unspent monies were held until an eligible project was identified. Some monies had spend by dates and this was closely monitored.

The Section 106 rules were being tightened all the time and monies had to be spent for the reasons it was paid. Some developers were very understanding and, when asked have agreed for funds to be directed to a different project, but they did not have to do so.

Members asked how proactive officer were in getting monies allocated to and spent on projects and whether Parish Councils had been made aware of the monies available in their area.

The Development and Conservation Manager advised that the Communities Team worked very hard with the Planning Team to find ever more creative ways to spend the money. The Parish Councils were fully aware of funding available in their area.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the Development and Conservation Manager and his team be thanked for the work undertaken regarding Section 106 and Unilateral Undertakings;
- (2) That the contents of the report titled Section 106 and Unilateral Undertakings be noted;

- (3) That the Development and Conservation Manager be requested to present a report regarding Section 106 and Unilateral Undertakings to this Committee on an annual basis;
- (4) That, other than where a contribution has been negotiated for a specific purpose or project, Ward Members of the area where Section 106 or Unilateral Undertaking funding is generated and the Area Committee be consulted prior to funding being allocated away from that area or from a village location to a town.

REASON FOR DECISION: To ensure that there is a robust system for negotiating and managing Section 106 and Unilateral Undertakings.

84. WARD AND OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS – MEMBERS’ REPORTS

Chilterns Conservation Board

The Chairman gave an update regarding the Chilterns Conservation Board.

He advised that the Board had made a representation regarding the proposed raft of Luton developments.

London Luton Airport had made a presentation regarding their wish to develop 70 acres of their land, including light industrial and commercial usage. It was important to consider the traffic associated with this development.

The meeting closed at 9.09 p.m.

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Chairman