

Minutes



Listening Learning Leading

OF A MEETING OF THE

COMMUNITY INVESTMENT FUND PANEL

HELD AT 10.00AM ON 10 JUNE 2008

AT COUNCIL OFFICES, CROWMARSH GIFFORD

Present:

Ms J Bland, Mrs J Carr, Mrs S Cooper, Mr P Cross, Ms E Gillespie,
Mr J Nowell-Smith, Mr N Odd, Mrs P Slatter,

Apologies:

Mrs P Dawe, Capt J Flood, Mr M Leonard, Mr M Newland

Officers:

Mrs J Bolton, Mr J Duncalf, Ms S Reid, Ms V Taylor, Mrs J Thompson

3. Bids for funding from the Community Investment Fund

Wallingford Sports Trust – resurfacing all-weather pitch, Hithercroft, Wallingford

Mr Richard Knight, trustee of the Wallingford Sports Trust, and four representatives of the Sports Trust made a presentation to and answered questions from the Panel.

He gave the background to the sports trust which had successfully provided sports facilities for the town for 30 years. The Trust had a new 30-year lease on the ground. The all-weather pitch had been laid in 1995 and had a 10-12 year lifespan. Renting the pitch provided a major income source for the trust and allowed it to run the pitch and the remainder of the facility for the benefit of the community. The pitch had been funded from S106 levies originally. Although there had been plans to save for its renewal, other priorities had intervened over the years. A stronger financial management plan was in place to prevent the current predicament recurring.

The surface was becoming worn and unusable. Replacing the surface would allow the current seven sports clubs to continue to train. The trust would market the revamped pitches to increase casual and regular hires and encourage increased participation in sports. If the pitch was not replaced, there was no comparable facility in the area and sporting provision would be considerably reduced. Without the rental, the whole site would become unviable.

The trust were continuing to consult with potential new users and non-users and were marketing the sports facilities. A new surface would allow new activities such as sport for the disabled or lunch time soccer to start.

The town council was supportive but was not providing funding. Other funding sources were not easily available. Trust members were providing personal unsecured loans to cover the shortfall. Each sports club was self-financing and paid levies to the club which, along with the bar income and casual use, covered the balance of the costs.

East Hagbourne Parish Council – sports and leisure facility

Mr C Laing and three representatives of the local community attended gave a presentation to and answered questions from the Panel.

The council had given a grant to the scheme before but this had not been taken up because of the difficulty in securing the remainder of the funding. The scheme had not changed and further support was sought to enable it to proceed. It would not be possible to phase the scheme as all elements had to move together. Funding from the parish council, WREN and ToE was still available. A decision on the application to the football foundation was expected in July.

The scheme would provide a multi-purpose sports pavilion to provide changing facilities for football teams, space for some indoor sports, exercise and sports classes, and a bar area. The building would improve local facilities and was both environmentally sustainable and economically viable. The outdoor facilities would be improved by providing two multi use games areas, tarmaced practise for ball activities, new car park, cycle shed and a footpath that will link up to the existing local footpath network. He outlined the proposed uses of the new facility, support from local people and funding. The project is needed to provide improved sports and leisure facilities for the village and surrounding smaller communities.

The management committee had started meeting to agree how to implement the management plan and to assign roles. Half the running costs would be covered by the football and tennis clubs, and half from other hires. The hall would be managed and run by volunteers but caretaking and cleaning roles would be paid.

Didcot Town Council – Edmonds Play Park equipment

St Edmonds was the central park in Didcot with a large catchment area including social housing tenants and visitors to the Wave. The park was very well used throughout the day and in the evenings. The two senior schools used it, large community events were held on it, and it provided a space for supervised custody visits and for children to play safely. Other parks in the town had been improved using S106 money and this park was now one of the poorer in Didcot. In a large and growing town, high-quality recreation space should be a priority.

The scheme to replace play equipment was required because the current equipment was very old. Any useable items would be kept and all obsolete or unsafe items replaced. The town council was contributing £6000, project management and maintenance. WREN had been asked for grant. If the project was not fully funded, the scheme could be redesigned to the budget, but would be less attractive. The district council's play strategy placed importance on informal play, but providing this was always expensive.

The scheme had been designed after consultation with users, youth groups in the town, and through both meetings and informal discussions at the park. The items had been chosen by the young people and reflected what they currently used and would use if available. Some fitness kit for teenagers and an area near the Wave for young children was included

Headway, Henley – Centre for brain acquired injuries

Mr Brian Pyle and two representatives from the organisation gave a presentation to and answered questions from the Panel.

Brain injury was a growing disability affecting many people more or less severely every year. Headway provided the only dedicated rehabilitation and day provision in the area. The project supported very vulnerable disadvantaged and isolated people who had no access to other specialist support. Headway had to move from its present premises very soon, and was ready to start work on this project immediately with a completion time of 10 weeks from the start date.

The new site would allow Headway to continue to provide a safe and stimulating social environment, employment for 12 people, work experience for trainees and students, and a range of services to promote independent living. It could expand to an after-hours facility and to offer other activities. It provided rehabilitation for 47 people a week and over 300 in the course of the year.

Henley Town Council had offered a five year lease on the building with a possibility of extension depending on negotiations with the youth club. If successful, the project would provide facilities for both Headway and the youth club which would be well used throughout the day and evening. If the lease was terminated after five years, Headway would have to move and the community would gain a refurbished building. Questions remained about the exact terms of the renewal clauses in the lease.

Henley amateur football club – new pavilion

Mr Trevor Howell gave a presentation to and answered questions from the panale.

The club currently had 16 teams and 275 members and was growing annually. A new pavilion would allow the club to provide improved and safer facilities for the youngsters using the pitches while retaining the existing clubhouse for meetings, adult teams, and to separate adults and children when changing. It would provide

safe access to changing rooms and toilets by the pitch and lighting for leaving winter training when the main floodlights were off.

The club occupied the third largest open space in the town. A new clubhouse would provide opportunities to run soccer schools and sports camps, expand the under-9's provision and start a school of excellence for this group, start girls' football, expand into sport for the disabled, and accommodate other field sports. This would increase the range and number of participants in sport on the site. The site was currently used throughout the year with mini soccer, summer camps and school sports days throughout the summer.

Henley Town Council had agreed that the current lease would be extended until 2022 under the renewal clauses. The present clubhouse lease cost £825 a year and the club's finances were able to fund its retention. The club had an excellent fundraiser who had applied to a number of funding sources, and had good opportunities to raise funds from club events and from parents of players.

Upper Thames Rowing Club – major refurbishment of clubhouse

Mrs Bland declared a personal interest as she knew the president of the rowing club through her involvement with rowing in Henley with the Phyllis Court rowing club.

Ms Juliet Machan and Mr Steve Dance gave a presentation to and answered questions from the panel.

The club had grown to over 300 members since it started in 1963. The current clubhouse, built in 1982, needed refurbished and redeveloped to meet the needs of the club now and in the future. New changing rooms, improved gym, disabled access and better training facilities would allow the club to increase participation in the sport and offer a community building for other groups. The club offered a venue for rowing in the town, for visiting rowers, and for casual visitors using the river or the footpath. Although they had approached a nearby club to discuss shared facilities, discussions had not been productive.

Improved facilities would enable the club to achieve its vision of 200 new members, all day use of the clubhouse, and an adaptive rowing group. The club had about 30 new members each year and provided an introduction for three local junior schools as well as for students from secondary school and college starting the sport.

The club had raised £470,000 itself in a year. Most of the funding was in place and if the remainder could be raised from grant applications and loans, the project was planned for completion in March 2009. On-going fundraising was always required to pay for new and replacement equipment and to cover running costs.

St Mary's Church, Wallingford – refurbishment of church

Mr Roger Morgan, the vicar, and three church members gave a presentation to and answered questions from the panel.

The church was central prominent feature in the town and a refurbished interior would provide a large bright modern space to meet modern community needs. The refurbishment would provide a large space for community use while allowing worship to continue on Sundays. The aims for the use of the space were backed by consultation with the community and potential users. The space would seat 240 and would provide a larger venue than the Methodist church or nearby halls and meeting rooms. Wide consultation and discussions with the town council had shown that the church would not compete with other venues for users, and that the present usage could be doubled.

The aims of the project were to help revitalise the town centre, provide a safe, disabled and child friendly space, and cater for the need for a large venue. More adults in the church in the evening would increase the presence of adults in the town centre and discourage anti-social behaviour. Use during the day would bring people into the town and encourage them to use the local shops. Two children's and two adult groups would definitely make use of the new hall. Other uses could include holiday clubs, youth work, crèche, concerts and religious performances. The tower room would be soundproofed and could be used separately. Audio-visual kit on site would enable multi-purpose use.

All necessary permissions had been obtained. All but 24% of the funding was secured, 21% from the church's fundraising, 38% from sale of a church house, and 17% in grants. The project would commence early in 2009 if funds were in place. The stone floor was practical and designed to work with the under-floor heating to retain heat and reduce running costs.

Watlington Parish Council – Recreation Ground regeneration

Rev'd Angie Paterson declared a personal and prejudicial interest in this application as the Chairman of the Parish Council submitting the application. She entered the room to speak on behalf of the project and answer questions, but then left the meeting.

Rev'd Paterson and three members of the committee gave a presentation to and answered questions from the panel.

The recreation ground was poorly laid out with users separated from each other and no integrated use of the space. The play equipment dated from the 1960s. the parish council received numerous complaints about the recreation ground and the equipment. The new scheme had been designed after extensive consultation with the community and both local schools, and several youngsters had been involved in the final planning including the location of the different activities. The play area would form the heart of the recreation ground while leaving space for other activities. Other equipment would also be improved or replaced. A fitness trail would be

provided round the edge. The scheme had started off on a smaller scale and had expanded after the consultation process.

The refurbishment would promote more social use of the space and discourage anti-social uses by encouraging people to use the space more often and more fully. It would also bring residents back to their own recreation ground rather than travelling to other places. The ground was an important part of the community facilities in the village.

About 50% of the funding had been raised through fundraising, grants and the parish council's funds. The council had a track record of delivering projects. The work could be phased but would be better completed as a whole.

Chinnor Village Hall – refurbishment and extension

Mr Geoff Andrews declared a personal and prejudicial interest in this application as a member of the Village Hall Committee involved in the application. He entered the room to speak on behalf of the project and answer questions, but then left the meeting.

Mrs Linda Cameron and Mr Andrews from the Village Hall committee, and one supporter, gave a presentation to and answered questions from the panel.

The village hall had been built in 1939. Since then the village had grown to 7000 residents and was the fifth largest settlement in the district. Small developments and the proposed housing on the cement works were further increasing the population. Chinnor was still a village, and had village-style facilities which had not kept pace with development. The village hall was the only large community venue in the village, although there were a number of smaller halls and meeting places. Other spaces were considerably smaller. At the moment, the hall booking were good and there was sufficient demand for the new facilities.

The refurbishment and extensions would give the village a larger, modern and improved community building. A second hall holding 80 people would complement the large hall. The U3A, bowls club and drama groups were among those who would use the refurbished premises.

The project had £100,000 committed from the parish council and £100,000 from the cement works benevolent fund. Once the remaining funds were in place the project could begin within a few months in phased stages to keep the hall in use throughout the refurbishment.

Thame Youth Theatre & Lord William's School – interior and equipment for rebuild of theatre

Ms Cate Donaldson, theatre development manager, and a committee member, gave a presentation to and answered questions from the panel.

The theatre had started in 1989 and had since developed into an independent community youth theatre, separate from the school although sharing premises. It had 100 members between 9 and 18 years of age. It provided three drama and one dance group a week, and could expand to five sessions, summer schools and work in primary schools. It produced performances, and participated in community events.

The theatre had been destroyed in an arson attack and this project sought to rebuild an improved community drama space. The two studios would give the theatre space to operate two groups simultaneously, or to hire the space out to other community groups. The space could be used as a hub for amateur performing arts in the town, which was lacking at the moment. The expanded size would provide good circulation space and amenities for performances and an exhibition space.

The school would use the facility during their working day.

Funding was complicated by the insurance claim which covered certain elements of the cost, the funding for some aspects by the County Council and the school, and the on-going maintenance at the school. Some aspects were being provided anyway. The disabled toilets, refurbished toilets, the sprung floor in the dance studio, and some of the fittings would not be provided without this grant funding. A simple rebuilding with the existing funds would not allow for better facilities or any expansion of the theatre or new community use and once built would be difficult to change. However, the theatre would continue much as before without this grant funding.

Thame Girl Guides – new Guiding headquarters

Ms Linda Newton and three senior members of the project team gave a presentation to and answered questions from the panel.

The Guides had seen 75% growth in the last few years and now had 48 girls on the waiting list for the three guide packs because there was not enough space to accommodate larger or more packs. 24% of girls in Thame were involved in the Guides. The nursery had a waiting list of 33. The current lease expires in 2011 and will not be renewed if the existing building remains, so if it is not replaced, the Guides will have to move or close. A larger building with two meeting rooms would allow double the current usage for the Guides and other community groups.

Consultation suggested that there was widespread support for the expansion of the Guides and that the new building would be well used by Thame groups. Some groups had to meet outside the town because there was no suitable space. The central location minimised the environmental impact and maximised the catchment area for the packs. Joint parking could be negotiated with the town council and some

dedicated parking provided. Some of this would use grass infill similar to that at the leisure centre.

A district council grant would allow the Guides to access other funding.

The proposed building had double thickness insulation, efficient gas heating and solar water heating, energy-saving lighting, plenty of natural light, and stack ventilation for the toilets to minimise the environmental and running costs for a reasonable outlay.

Thame Town Council – Southern Road play scheme

Mr Adam Barnes, from Thame Town Council, the Town Clerk and the contractor gave a presentation to and answered questions from the panel.

This recreation ground was the central open space in the town and should be the premier site in the town and surrounding area.. The wooden equipment had not lasted as well as metal equipment might and had reached the end of its usable life. Although the amount requested was high, as was the project cost, the refurbishment would greatly improve facilities in the town. The project would provide a pleasant area for all ages to congregate with a variety of equipment for different ages including adult fitness equipment and benches to encourage socialising and supervision. The Guide headquarters, nursery, field, Phoenix trail and nature reserve and town centre were all easily accessible. The design created a safer space and had been developed in consultation with the community, police, and consultants. 75% of local children under 12, 200 teenagers and people visiting two open days – 1000 overall - had been involved in the process.

The PPG17 report recently published said that all sites in the area except those in Chinnor needed upgrading. The council's play strategy had an action to encourage councils to apply for CIF grants to upgrade deficient play areas.

Where possible, usable equipment would be moved to other play areas and the logs reused. The concrete bases would be recycled.

A sinking fund had been established to refurbish existing grounds. The project could be completed in stages although this was not ideal and would be easier to complete in one stage.

Berinsfield Amateur Boxing Club – expansion of clubhouse to create space for a second ring.

Ms Catherine Crowfoot, Mr Mel Corrigan and six supporters gave a presentation to and answered questions from the panel.

The club had 99 members and wished to continue its expansion. It was one of the few amateur boxing clubs, and few dedicated boxing rings, in the county. The club offered benefits for young people through training and encouraging self-esteem, self-

discipline and achievement at different levels. The club catered for beginners through to competition-standard boxing. A second ring and improved facilities would allow the club to expand its core activities, create employment for a club manager, and increase the range of provision to under-10s, more women, and related activities such as boxercise.

The long-term vision was to provide a centre of excellence for the area which could be used by other clubs. The club had looked nationally and internationally for good practice to help it. The Amateur Boxing Association were promoting the sport's approach to discipline and training to the government. Sport England did have some funds for boxing, although it was uncertain how much and how many clubs were applying.

Consultation had shown that the local community and agencies wanted the facility. Funding had been requested from various sources to minimise the risk of one falling through. All applications would be decided by September, including an application to Sport England. There was a comprehensive strategy to make sure that running costs could be covered.

The meeting closed at 4.20pm

Chairman

Date