

Minutes



Listening Learning Leading

OF A MEETING OF THE

COMMUNITY INVESTMENT FUND PANEL

HELD AT 10.00AM ON 8 JUNE 2009

AT COUNCIL OFFICES, CROWMARSH GIFFORD

Present:

Ms J Bland, Capt J Flood, Ms E Gillespie, Mr M Leonard , Mr N Odd, Mr A Rooke,
Mrs P Slatter, Mrs M Turner

Mr IR Mann, Cabinet member, attended to listen to the presentations.

Apologies:

Mrs S Cooper, Mr P Cross, Mr J Nowell-Smith

Officers:

Mrs J Bolton, Mr E Nieburg, Mrs J Thompson
Mr M Moore attended for item 12.

11. Bids for funding from the Community Investment Fund

The committee heard presentations from and asked question of seven applicants for funding from the Community Investment Fund.

Watlington Tennis Club – club pavilion restoration

Mr Graham Smith (Treasurer) and Ms Linda Wancke (Chairman of the tennis club) gave a presentation and answered questions from the committee.

Watlington Memorial Club had a membership of over 750, about 30 per cent of the town. The sports and social facilities were in an easily accessible town centre location. The tennis club had 256 members including 91 juniors, and junior numbers had increased since two of the three courts had been floodlit and after a publicity campaign. The courts were open daily till 9.30pm, and used in all weathers and all year. The club played in county leagues as well as providing social games. Summer camps, adult, junior and private coaching were provided.

The current pavilion was dilapidated and now unfit to use. There was no water supply or drainage and there were structural problems. It could not cater for current court

usage or provide indoor seating or catering. The main memorial hall building was too remote and often in use, and the bowls club pavilion was also often in use at the times required by the tennis club. The club used the squash club's showers.

A new building would provide an open-plan room, storage, kitchen and toilets, an outside seating and children's area. This would attract more members, allow a greater variety of events, increase the number of teenagers playing, provide for a toddler tennis session, and for family days. Showers could be included later, but the cost was too high at present.

The club was contributing 40 per cent of the cost from its own funds. The club had successfully completed the previous floodlighting scheme with help from the Lawn Tennis Association and so could not get a further grant for this project. Members provided professional planning services, but may not be able to provide labour. The Memorial Club had valuable assets but little surplus cash.

Thame Football partnership – Church Farm Community Football Club facility

Mr Jake Collinge (Chairman of Thame Football Partnership), Mr Tim Green (Chairman of Thame Boys') and Ms Anna Kocerhan (project director) gave a presentation and answered questions from the committee.

The football teams currently had to share pitches and facilities with other teams around the area. The youth teams had 350 members with another 150 possible members. The adult team required adequate facilities. With these, the club could provide for twice the membership, provide a £3 million investment in the town, and offer new much-needed facilities.

The club could create a vibrant community facility with a community building, changing area and bar, recreation area, nine pitches including a floodlit main pitch and an artificial pitch, and a car park to replace the previous facility. The proposals are ambitious but are the minimum necessary to provide adequate facilities for the junior and senior clubs. The club would be viable in the long term because income from fees and hire charges would cover the anticipated overheads.

There is a complex financial arrangement because of private agreements with the owner of the previous site. The S106 agreement, once signed, should give a guaranteed agreement although the final sum payable may depend on the detailed planning permission for the old site and is not payable until this is determined. There was a 60-year lease on the new site.

Costs are understood, and a professional team will deliver the project. Over £1 million is likely to be secured from other grants. Providing a smaller scale scheme would not allow the club to deliver a viable community and sporting facility.

Nettlebed Sports Association – sports pavilion replacement

Mr Dennis Rocks (Chairman of Nettlebed Sports Association) and Mr Peter Ashby (Treasurer) gave a presentation and answered questions from the committee.

The association had been re-established in 2007 to manage the site, pavilion and its redevelopment. It would continue as the management committee of the new facility.

The current building was not fit to use and had outlived its expected life. A complete new building would provide an additional facility to complement the larger village hall and community room. It would provide a home for cricket and football clubs, reduce anti-social behaviour and provide a base for other sports and social clubs.

The annual parish meeting had expressed support, as had attendees at parish council meetings, association meetings and fund-raising events had been well supported, and most residents supported the project.

The parish council had not wanted to raise the precept to provide funds. Other grants, further fundraising and possibly a grant from the Fleming estate who owned the land may be possible. The association had raised £24,000 to date. Local tradesmen would be employed to fit out the building, keeping the money within the local economy. Many people had volunteered to help with the upkeep of the present building and may be able to help with building and maintaining the new one.

East Hagbourne Parish Council – Multi Use Games Area

Mr David Rickeard (Chairman of the Parish Council) and Mr Dave Hornsey (Tennis Club chairman) gave a presentation and answered questions from the committee.

The multi-use games areas (MUGAs) would provide a community tennis facility for casual play as well as competitions. The two courts would be primarily for playing tennis but could be used for netball or basketball, and for football practice. The MUGAs would be fenced and locked to prevent vandalism and damage. A booking system with fees managed by the key holders would be used to control but not limit access. The parish-council funded games wall would be freely accessible for casual use.

The tennis club had to use courts in Didcot, and the limited availability and travelling had resulted in the club ceasing to play this year. Tennis was the sport in highest demand in the village. The club had had 40 members in 2008, would be able to reform and use the courts, and would be able to play in summer leagues. Winter use would require floodlighting. Clubs and groups from other villages would be able to book the MUGAs.

A proper management committee would be set up to manage and maintain the MUGAs. The parish council were paying £50,000 in 2009 for the games wall, storage, and a play area. £18,000 funding from WREN had been sought but not confirmed. Sports clubs would pay rental and casual users would pay a fee to cover maintenance costs.

The MUGAs and associated games wall formed part of the overall long-term development plan for the recreation ground, and would improve the facilities available within the village.

Cholsey Parish Council (PARC) – new play area

Ms Katy Sims (fund manager) and Ms Stella Mitchell (Chairman of PARC) gave a presentation and answered questions from the committee.

PARC (Play Adventure Recreation for Cholsey) were developing the scheme and raising funds on behalf of the parish council. The current play equipment was 20 years old and nearing the end of its life, and was unlikely to pass its next safety inspection. The scheme incorporated a variety of equipment offering mental and physical challenges for all ages and abilities. Junior and senior areas were complemented by seating and a picnic area. Pieces for older ages encouraged controlled risk and challenges.

The Fairmile development would increase the number of young families in the village. Currently a quarter of the 3,500 residents were under 18.

The play area was in the recreation ground in the village centre, within walking distance for the village. It would provide a place for families to meet, play and mix in a safe environment. The equipment was vandal-proof and had been carefully researched to provide the correct balance and quality within the scheme.

Consultation had been undertaken at the school, youth club, and via the village magazine. In developing the 2007 village plan, the majority of respondents to the village consultation had rated the play area as less than satisfactory, poor or very poor.

PARC had raised £22,000 including a parish council grant and donations from other groups and individuals. If the whole cost could not be covered, a smaller scheme would be undertaken. The County Council playbuilder fund was targeted at older children and had not been approached for this scheme. WREN and the big lottery fund had been approached, and the chill-out fund and Oxfordshire's community foundation could be approached. The parish council would purchase, maintain and replace the play equipment.

Brightwell cum Sotwell Community Village Stores Ltd – new village shop

Mr Phil Jones (steering group member) and Mr Jim Sanger (Chairman of the steering group) gave a presentation and answered questions from the committee.

A village shop would encourage walking through good pedestrian access, provide a home delivery and good neighbour service to the elderly, provide independence and work experience for young people, and provide informal community interaction. The building exceeded expected sustainability standards. Produce would be sourced locally and local suppliers could provide meat, eggs and vegetables. The allotment group could provide vegetables for sale.

The village shop had closed seven years ago and the village currently only had a post office open three days a week. The post office used part of one of the community rooms in the village hall and hence would not be able to use the rest of the space for a shop. The room was used for other events when the post office was closed.

The group had sent out 512 questionnaires, Of the 398 responses, 85% had said it was important to have a shop, nearly half had offered a donation and 150 people had volunteered to help. Updates on the project were given in the village magazine.

The management group was an Industrial and Provident Society, not a charity, so could pay and recover VAT. The shop would employ a full time manager and recruit volunteer staff. It would break even on half of the amount residents said they would spend, and at the same level as Ewelme's new shop. They had not tested the shop's viability.

The steering group had applied for LEADER funding as well as this grant. Without the funds, the project would not start.

Didcot All Saints Parochial Church Council – new community hall

Rev'd Karen Beck (priest in charge of All Saints) and Mr Colin Campbell (project co-ordinator) gave a presentation and answered questions from the committee.

The current hall had a cracked floor slab and an asbestos roof making it unrepairable. A previous grant for a replacement hall had not been used because that scheme, based on a misinterpretation of the rules, did not make the best use of the site and did not deliver the best possible building. The new scheme provided a double height function room, storage, offices, a small meeting room, kitchen and toilets. Rainwater harvesting and a ground source heat pump reduced running costs.

The hall had a number of regular users, but had lost between six and nine regular groups because of the poor state of the building. There were a further nine potential users. The hall was still in use every week-night.

Consultation had been undertaken at two public meetings and lots of informal discussions.

The church did not need the hall for its own purposes. The parochial church council provided members of the management committee, oversaw the project, and held the funds, but the project was not its responsibility or for its benefit. The Mendip Heights and Great Western communities needed neutral community facilities. A good-quality hall would increase the sense of community, a sense of pride, and generate more local community activities for all ages and abilities.

The hall management committee had raised about £80,000 so far and were continuing to raise funds. This was the first major grant application, although applications had been made to WREN and BIFFA, and further business fundraising was planned. A short-term £100,000 loan may be available. The hall was currently self-sustaining, excluding maintenance costs, and the new hall should generate more income but its costs remain about the same.

12. Closing session

Councillors completed their scoring sheets and asked questions of officers. Mr Moore updated the committee on progress with the planning application for the former site of Thame Football Club.

The meeting closed at 3.00pm

Chairman

Date