

Minutes

of a meeting of the

Community Grants

Panel



held on Thursday, 9 February 2023 at
9.30 am in Meeting Room 1, Abbey
House, Abbey Close, Abingdon,
OX14 3JE

Open to the public, including the press

Present in the meeting room:

Councillors: George Levy (Chair), Victoria Haval, Lynn Lloyd, Jo Robb, and Andrea Warren

Officers: Darius Zarazel (Democratic Services Officer), Cheryl Reeves (Community Enablement Team Leader), Jayne Bolton (Community Wellbeing Manager), Kathy Deacon (Community Enablement Officer), Madeline Swaine (Community Enablement Officer), and Lynsey Green (Community Enablement Officer)

Remote attendance:

Officers: Jeremy Lloyd (Broadcasting Officer) and Harry Barrington-Mountford (Head of Policy and Programmes)

14 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Axel Macdonald and David Bretherton.

15 Minutes

RESOLVED: to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 7 March 2022 as a correct record and agree that the Chair sign these as such.

16 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

17 Urgent business and chairman's announcements

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and outlined the meeting procedure to be followed. He also explained the emergency evacuation procedure and that there was no urgent business.

18 Public participation

A list showing members of the public who had registered to speak had been sent to the panel prior to the meeting.

19 South Oxfordshire Capital Grant Scheme 2022/23

The panel reviewed and noted the submitted grant applications and received representations from supporters of the following applications:

Wheatley Parochial Church Council for the revival at St Mary's

Peter Fanning and Richard Cosier, representatives from Wheatley Parochial Church Council, spoke in support of the application.

The panel asked the representatives about the changes to the project and ways it had been improved since it was last submitted to the community grants panel. In response, Peter Fanning confirmed to members that changes to the scheme involved new lighting, replacement to the vestry floor, and a substituting of certain materials which had led to a reduction in construction costs.

Members also inquired about how the applicants estimated the total budget for the project and the supporters confirmed that they had received this costing from a professional quantity surveyor.

Regarding the heating of the building, members asked for clarification about how the building was insulated and what method of heating the applicants planned to use. Richard Cosier clarified that they planned to use electric heating, which may be reassessed in the future, but that heating was not part of their application.

Finally, members also raised the feedback from equalities for the provision of an additional handrail in the toilets and for more features to assist the visually impaired and the representatives for the application confirmed that they had passed these points onto their architect to be included in the plans.

RESOLVED: to note the application of Wheatley Parochial Church Council.

Holton Parish Council for Holton Orchard play equipment

Allan East, representative of Holton Parish Council, spoke in support of the application.

The panel asked the representative for the application about the types of trees planted in the orchard area of the site and Allen East informed the members that they had selected fruit trees and wildflower areas have been planted, and that the community were already benefiting from the area.

Members then inquired about the equalities feedback who noted that the play area might not be easily accessible for disabled children and could include more inclusive play equipment. In response, Allen East expressed his support for these ideas and had already had conversations with the councils' equality and exclusivities officer, but felt the project needed to balance the cost of completion against the amount of

equipment they could provide. In addition, he informed members that the equipment is low level with no kerbs, in order to improve access and they have also included sensory play.

The panel did note that there was no path to the proposed play area but the representative for the application expressed a commitment to raise money for a hard path connecting the gate to the play area.

RESOLVED: to note the application of Holton Parish Council.

Thomley Hall Centre Ltd for an interactive water feature with disabled access

Ewan Shinton, representative of Thomley Hall Centre Ltd, spoke in support of the application.

The panel asked the representative of the application about what the expected age range of users of the feature would be and Ewan Shinton predicted a broad range, from three to fifty. In addition, the panel inquired about the how the energy and supply of water would be funded. In response, the representative confirmed there were two providers they could go through to supply the project and that the scheme itself had been scaled down to be more resource efficient.

A question was also raised about how many people would be able to use the water feature and Ewan Shinton responded to member that he believed the use of the facility would likely be seasonal, although they plan to keep the site in operation all year round and therefore that it could serve the 30,000 annual visitors they receive. The representative for the application also highlighted that there is a changing area in place which is fully accessible.

RESOLVED: to note the application of Thomley Hall Centre Ltd.

South Moreton Parish Council for the South Moreton recreation ground path

Councillors Johnny Gilbert and Richard Macdonald, representatives of South Moreton Parish Council, spoke in support of the application.

The panel asked about the surface of the path, which the representative confirmed to be crushed gravel and locally sourced. Councillors Johnny Gilbert and Richard Macdonald also clarified with the panel that this surface is suitable for members of the public to walk, run, cycle, or use wheelchairs on and that they believe it to be a cheaper, more sustainable, alternative to a tarmacked surface.

Members also inquired about how significant the path would be in terms of increasing access around the village. In response to this, the representatives suggested that around 40-50 families would be served by the new pedestrian access including many who could use this to walk to the primary school.

Finally, members asked about the proposed path's width and if there were any comments made about this from local residents but the representatives confirmed that they had not heard of any. They also confirmed that that the path would be one metre wide, with passing places.

RESOLVED: to note the application of South Moreton Parish Council.

Dorchester-on-Thames Parish Council for the improvement and upgrade of village playground and playing field to make it more inclusive and to improve outcomes for all local children and adults

Rob Ballantyne, representative from Dorchester-on-Thames Parish Council, spoke in support of the application.

The panel asked about how the equipment would be maintained and if the parish would be responsible. Rob Ballantyne then confirmed that the existing play equipment was inspected fortnightly, and that the parish covered the maintenance cost. Therefore, the new equipment would be added to the parish's maintenance schedule.

Members also inquired as to whether swings could be added to the plan, primarily for their inclusive benefits to teenage girls, and Rob Ballantyne responded by saying that they had two sets of swings already but that they were hoping to add in another swing for young children, through recognised this would not address the plea raised.

RESOLVED: to note the application of Dorchester-on-Thames Parish Council.

Wallingford Sports Trust for the installation of solar panels and battery

John Atkins, representative of Wallingford Sports Trust, spoke in support of the application.

Members asked the representatives about their energy usage about what could be generated through the proposed solar panels. In response Jon Atkins confirmed that around 25-30% of their current usage could be generated by the solar panel installation, which would equate to about £15-20,000 per year. It was also noted that the solar panels themselves could cost £40,000 and the batteries £25-30,000.

The panel also asked Jon Atkins about potentially installing a wind turbine, but he confirmed that this was considered but that the site was not considered suitable.

RESOLVED: to note the application of Wallingford Sports Trust.

SOFEA for upgrading IT infrastructure

James Plunket, representative from SOFEA, spoke in support of the application.

The panel asked about how the ongoing costs of the equipment would be managed, and the representative confirmed that the new equipment would form part of their budget and so would be included in their future fundraising targets.

The panel then got clarification about what was being requested and James Plunket confirmed that SOFEA were requesting the grant for personal computers, desktops, keyboards, and mice and that other IT infrastructure such as routers and cabling were not included in their grant application.

Members also inquired about their community engagement and the representative confirmed they informally consult many people in the local community on a regular basis through their projects such as community larders. The panel also noted that South Oxfordshire District Council had previously donated 60 laptops to SOFEA for the 'Getting Oxfordshire Online' initiative and James Plunket informed members that these would have already gone out to local schools through food larders and housing associations within a few weeks.

RESOLVED: to note the application of SOFEA.

Berinsfield Parish Council for the installation of solar panels on the sports pavilion, Berinsfield

Members received and noted the application for the installation of solar panels on the sports pavilion, Berinsfield.

RESOLVED: to note the application of Berinsfield Parish Council.

Beckley and Stowood Village Hall Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) for an electric car charging point

Members received and noted the application for an electric car charging point.

RESOLVED: to note the application of Beckley and Stowood Village Hall CIO.

Didcot TRAIN – inspiring young people – for premises improvement

Members received and noted the application for premises improvement.

RESOLVED: to note the application of Didcot TRAIN.

Stanton St John Parish for the installation of 2 EV chargers

Michiel Stofferis, representative of Stanton St John Parish, spoke in support of the application.

The panel asked about the expected cost of installation for the electric vehicle (EV) chargers as some members had seen the actual cost far exceed the predicted, and that if this was the case, would the applicant be able to still fund the installation. In response, Michiel Stofferis confirmed that he believed they could fund the project due to the estimated costs they received and that the electric mains were located not far from the EV's chargers' installation point.

In addition, members asked if there would be a cost to use the chargers and the presentation for the application confirmed that this would be the case and that users would pay through a phone application. Michiel Stofferis also added that the parish would get some of the money from this in order to provide the chargers continued maintenance.

Members noted that the project had received lower scores for public consultation and asked the representative about the level of demand for the EV charging points. Michiel Stofferis replied he believed visitors to the village would welcome this and that, as fast charging was more effective than home charging, local residents would use it too.

RESOLVED: to note the application of Stanton St John Parish.

Clifton Hampden and Burcot Sea Scout Group for a new roof for scout hut

Ian Shortman, David Croft, and Yvonne Peet, representatives of Clifton Hampden and Burcot Scout Group, spoke in support of the application.

Members asked about the roof itself, which was confirmed as being a steel sheet metal, shallow angle pitched roof, with no insulation and the applicants were looking to replace it with a modern like for like metal sheeting, felted and insulated with the potential for installing solar panels at a later date.

The panel also asked about what would happen if a new roof was not provided and the representatives of the application responded by saying that, in the worst case, they would struggle to continue their operation.

On community engagement, members asked about how the applicants had consulted the community and Yvonne Peet responded by saying that they conducted a survey in which 99% said that they want to keep the scout hut. The representatives also added that the scout group itself has seen increasing interest and membership.

The panel then inquired into the application's sustainability scoring but Ian Shortman informed members that the group conducted several different activities around the local area positively impacting the climate, such as litter picking, the young people's work towards several environmental badge achievements as scouts, recycling food waste when camping, and recent work with the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority based in Culham where the scouts built a solar powered battery charger using recycled material.

RESOLVED: to note the application of Clifton Hampden and Burcot Sea Scout Group.

Warborough Parish Council for the Warborough sports pavilion refurbishment project

During this application the meeting length had reached almost two and a half hours. In accordance with the council's Constitution, the panel agreed to extend the meeting for 30 minutes to note the remaining applications.

Jonnie Bradshaw and Mark Searle, representatives of Warborough Parish Council, spoke in support of the application.

The panel asked about the responsibility for the long-term management of the building and who would ensure that it does not fall into disrepair again. In response, the representatives for the application confirmed to members that it was a parish council asset and now had its own budget line. In addition, the parish decided that a complete refurbishment of the building would be more effective than a series of small repairs

and that future hirings would help generate revenue which would also help pay for the buildings upkeep.

In response to a question about where the storage would be, as it was removed from the plans for the pavilion, Jonnie Bradshaw and Mark Searle informed the panel that a new outbuilding is provided which would provide the storage for the pavilion.

Members also inquired into the building's future usage as a community asset. On this point, Mark Searle clarified that the pavilion would be run in a similar way to the village hall, that there would be a series of regular bookings from groups such as the cricket club, but that the rest of the time it would be open to rent for the public and that they expect it to be available 90% of the year. The panel then asked if the applicant could provide additional facilities for the wider community, such as a baby changing station, and the representatives confirmed they would look into this.

Members also noted the consultation response from Sport England that the proposal did not meet their recommendations, but the representatives of the application responded saying that they believed the physical limitations of the building prevented them meeting those guidelines. Members also noted that although the building was not listed, it was in a protected view area, so this may impact the ability to extend the pavilion.

In addition, members also brought up the concerns of the Active Communities team who had noted the reduction in number of toilets and showers in the proposal and that the flexible third changing room had no toilet facility. In response to this, Jonnie Bradshaw and Mark Searle highlighted the importance of the proposed third changing room, a flexible room which could be used by girls or a smaller group, and that the disabled toilet would be available to them via an outside access. Overall, the representatives believed the plans were a compromise but an improvement to the current situation.

RESOLVED: to note the application of Warborough Parish Council.

Henley-on-Thames Bowling Club for replacing storage heaters with air conditioning

Members received and noted the application for replacing storage heaters with air conditioning.

RESOLVED: to note the application of Henley-on-Thames Bowling Club.

The first period of the meeting closed at 12.27pm.

The second period of the meeting began at 1.30pm and the panel discussed the applications and devised recommendations to be sent to the Cabinet Member for Community Wellbeing about which grant applications should be funded.

At this stage, Councillor Victoria Haval declared an interest in the Clifton Hampden and Burcot Sea Scout Group application for a new roof for scout hut as she was a member of a different scout group and so would not discuss, or vote on, the application.

Wheatley Parochial Church Council for the revival at St Mary's

The panel discussed the projects criteria scores and agreed that the score should be 22 out of 30.

Holton Parish Council for Holton Orchard play equipment

The panel discussed the projects criteria scores and agreed that the score should be 25 out of 30.

Thomley Hall Centre Ltd for an interactive water feature with disabled access

The panel discussed the projects criteria scores and agreed that the score should be 27 out of 30.

South Moreton Parish Council for the South Moreton recreation ground path

The panel discussed the projects criteria scores and agreed that the score should be 22 out of 30.

Dorchester-on-Thames Parish Council for the improvement and upgrade of village playground and playing field to make it more inclusive and to improve outcomes for all local children and adults

The panel discussed the projects criteria scores and agreed that the score should be 21 out of 30.

Wallingford Sports Trust for the installation of solar panels and battery

The panel discussed the projects criteria scores and agreed that the score should be 24 out of 30.

SOFEA for upgrading IT infrastructure

The panel discussed the projects criteria scores and agreed that the score should be 17 out of 30.

The panel also agreed that a condition be placed on the grant so that the money be earmarked for just personal computers, laptops, mice, and keyboards and not other IT equipment such as cabling or routers.

Berinsfield Parish Council for the installation of solar panels on the sports pavilion, Berinsfield

The panel discussed the projects criteria scores and agreed that the score should be 17 out of 30.

The panel also agreed that a condition be placed on the grant for Berinsfield Parish Council to conduct an energy audit before the money is released.

Beckley and Stowood Village Hal CIO for an electric car charging point

The panel discussed the projects criteria scores and agreed that the score should be 17 out of 30.

The panel raised some concerns about the ability to secure the project with the funding provided but were satisfied with the officers' confirmation that if the applicants cannot complete the project, they would be obliged to return the grant funding.

Didcot TRAIN – inspiring young people – for premises improvement

The panel discussed the projects criteria scores and agreed that the score should be 17 out of 30.

Stanton St John Parish for the installation of 2 EV chargers

The panel discussed the projects criteria scores and agreed that the score should be 18 out of 30.

The panel raised some concerns about the ability to secure the project with the funding provided but were satisfied with the officers' confirmation that if the applicants cannot complete the project, they would be obliged to return the grant funding.

Clifton Hampden and Burcot Sea Scout Group for a new roof for scout hut

The panel discussed the projects criteria scores and agreed to increase their 'Action on Climate Emergency' score and 'Community need, inclusion, and consultation' scores as the panel were impressed by the action they were taking on the climate emergency, as the roof would enable them to install solar panels and would be better insulated, through their community actions such as litter picking, the work they do with the scouts, and by their public consultation exercise.

The panel agreed to add a point to each of these categories meaning the projects criteria score would be 21 out of 30

Warborough Parish Council for the Warborough sports pavilion refurbishment project

The panel discussed the projects criteria scores and agreed that the score should be 16 out of 30.

As members held reservations about the exact design of the building, the panel agreed that a condition be placed on the grant requiring them 'To submit revised plans by 1 August 2023, taking account of the guidance from England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) 'Creating-welcoming-environments' and the Equality Act, wherever

possible, and that they deliver the outcomes of increasing women's participation in cricket, appropriate male and female changing/showers/toilets, an accessible toilet and hireable space, and that 50 per cent of the funding would be released when building regulations approval (if required) had been granted, and all funding for the project had been secured.

Henley-on-Thames Bowling Club for replacing storage heaters with air conditioning

The panel discussed the projects criteria scores and agreed that the score should be 9 out of 30.

The Community Enablement Team Leader outlined the results of the panels discussion and scoring and informed the panel that, if the high priority applications (which scored between 21 and 30 points) were fully funded, the medium priority application (scoring between 15 and 20 points) would be able to receive 71.3% of their requested funding if it was equally distributed.

Overall, the panel agreed with the approach and therefore recommended to the Cabinet Member for Community Wellbeing that:

- 1) High priority applications should receive 100% of their requested funding (with the conditions outlined)
- 2) Medium priority application should receive 71.3% of their requested funding (with the conditions outlined)
- 3) Low priority applications should receive no grant funding

The meeting closed at 2.05 pm
