

PEWSEY AREA BOARD
6 OCTOBER 2011

COMMUNITY ASSET TRANSFER

Former Grafton School Playing Field

Executive Summary

This report deals with an application for the transfer of the former playing field at Grafton school to be transferred to Grafton Parish Council in accordance with Wiltshire Council's Community Asset Transfer Policy.

Proposal

The Area Board is asked to consider an application submitted by Grafton Parish Council for the transfer of the former playing field at Grafton school. The applicants' proposal is set out at Appendix 2.

Reasons For Proposal

This proposal supports and implements Wiltshire Council's Community Asset Transfer Policy.

Recommendation

To approve the transfer.

Caroline Brailey
Pewsey Community Area Manager

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Purpose of Report

1. The Area Board is asked to consider an application submitted by Grafton Parish Council for the transfer of the former school playing field at Grafton school (see plan attached at Appendix 1). The applicants' proposal is set out at Appendix 2.

Background

2. Grafton school closed at the end of August 2011. The building belongs to Salisbury Diocesan Board of Education (SDBE) and the playing field belongs to Wiltshire Council.
3. Wiltshire Council is supporting the principle of the transfer of community assets in order to empower and strengthen local communities. The Council believes that transferring appropriate public assets to communities leads to more responsive services that better meet local people's priorities.
4. Transfer of an asset can also provide the opportunity to lever more resources into a community and provide a more accessible and responsive base from which to deliver local services.
5. A community group or organisation can benefit from greater financial stability and build confidence through having ownership (or long term security through a lease) of a physical asset. This financial sustainability can help the organisation become less dependent on grants, provide security for further borrowing and opportunities for further growth.
6. Typically, organisations that would be considered appropriate are Voluntary and Community Groups/Associations, Town or Parish Councils, Trusts or Charities, or Social Enterprise Groups.

The application before the Area Board

7. The application from Grafton Parish Council is attached at Appendix 2 and relates to the transfer of the former Grafton school playing field for community recreation.

8. The application was submitted in accordance with the Council's application process and meets the requirements for consideration by the Area Board.
9. The Community Area Manager has consulted with Strategic Property Services. Local consultation has been undertaken by the applicant in accordance with the application checklist and the outcome of the consultation is included within the application. Cllr Wheeler, the local member, has been apprised.

The views of Council officers

10. On behalf of the Council, Strategic Property Services (who have overall responsibility for the Council's estates and property) has provided the following observations to the Area Board.
 - 10.1 The current vehicular access to the land is over the area owned by SDBE. An alternative access along Batt's Lane is owned by an adjoining householder and Grafton Parish Council is making arrangements to obtain vehicular rights over this access.
 - 10.2 Part of the land is used by Sunflowers Nursery. Grafton Parish Council and the nursery will need to make appropriate arrangements for the use of this land.
 - 10.3 The land is to be transferred on the standard basis. This is that there will be a covenant restricting use of the land to community purposes. If the land should cease to be used for this purpose it will revert to Wiltshire Council.
 - 10.4 The land has no value other than as amenity land and Grafton Parish Council will take over the maintenance of the area. Therefore, financial implications are limited to the maintenance cost previously incurred by Wiltshire Council being transferred to Grafton Parish Council.

Recommendation

11. To approve the transfer.

Caroline Brailey
Pewsey Community Area Manager
