

Report to	Pewsey Area Board
Date of Meeting	2 July 2012
Title of Report	Area Board Grants

Purpose of Report

To ask Councillors to consider 2 applications seeking 20012/13 Community Area Grant Funding

1. Wootton Rivers Recreation Project - to update and improve sports and recreation facilities, Seeking £5,000, Officer recommendation to approve **£2,140** conditional upon the remaining funding being sought/confirmed
2. St Michaels Parochial Church Council, Little Bedwyn – Bells Restoration Project Seeking £5,000, officer recommendation to grant a lesser amount of £2,500 conditional upon the remaining funding being confirmed.

1. Background

- 1.1. Area Boards have authority to approve Area Grants under powers delegated to them by the Deputy Leader and Cabinet member for Adult Care, Communities and Housing (4 April 2012). Under the Scheme of Delegation Area Boards must adhere to the Area Board Grants Guidance 2012/2013.
- 1.2. In accordance with the Scheme of Delegation, any decision of an Area Board that is contrary to the funding criteria and/or the officer's recommendation would need to demonstrate that the application in question has a wider community benefit, and give specific reasons for why this should justify an exception to the criteria.
- 1.3. The emphasis in the Coalition Government's Localism agenda supports the ethos of volunteering and community involvement and the nurturing of resilient communities. With this in mind Community Area Grants (CAGs) should be encouraged from and awarded to community and voluntary groups. Likewise, Small Grants (new this year) should be awarded to similar groups, as well as un-constituted groups of people wanting to improve things near to where they live.
- 1.4. Pewsey Area Board has been allocated a 2012/2013 budget of £44,943 for community grants, small grants, community partnership core funding and area board/councillor led initiatives. The area board at its last meeting committed £9,772 which needs to be taken from this figure giving a starting balance in 2012/13 of £35,171 (see page 3 for current balance)
- 1.5. Applications of up to and including £1,000 can be made for a Community Area Grant, which will not require matched funding. Amounts of £1,000 - £5000 will be required to find matched funding. The area board will rarely award more than £5,000.
- 1.6. Small Grants, new for this year will fund up to £350, where the total cost of the project does not exceed £350. This grant is aimed at enabling groups (including those not formally constituted) to implement projects, involving local people to make their community a better place to live.
- 1.7. Area boards will not consider Community Area Grant (CAG) applications from town and parish councils for purposes that relate to their statutory duties or powers that should be funded from the local town/parish precept. However this does not preclude bids from town/parish councils, encouraging community projects that provide new opportunities for local people or those functions that are not the sole responsibility of the town/parish council.
- 1.8. In addition to CAGs and Small Grants, councillors can submit an Area Board/Councillor Led Initiative. This enables area boards to tackle sticky community issues and/or community identified priorities. Cabinet have emphasised that they do not wish these to be used to avoid complying with Community Area Grant criteria or for filling gaps where there are council service shortfalls. The application process and form has been updated to bring it in line with the other grants.

- 1.9. Officers are required to provide recommendations in their funding reports (except in the case of Area Board/Councillor led initiatives), although the decision to support applications is made by Wiltshire Councillors on the Area Board.
- 1.10. Funding applications will be considered at every Area Board meeting.
- 1.11. Applicants are encouraged to contact and seek funding help from Charities Information Bureau (CIB) who work on behalf of Wiltshire Council. CIB support community and voluntary groups, town and parish councils to seek funding for community projects and schemes both from the Area Board and other local and national funding sources.
- 1.12. The 2012/2013 funding criteria and application forms are available on the council's website (www.wiltshire.gov.uk/areaboards) and paper versions are available from the Community Area Manager.
- 1.13. A decision was been made in 2010/2011 that paper copies of funding applications will no longer appear as part of the agenda in an attempt to reduce volume of paper used. However, the application forms will be available on the Wiltshire Council web site and hard copies available upon request.
- 1.14. All recipients of area board funding are expected to complete and return an evaluation form as soon as the project or activity has been completed and this should be accompanied by receipts and invoices, as well as photographs if possible. Failure to return the evaluation requested will preclude them from being considered for any future funding from the area board. This applies to all grants made by the area board.
- 1.15. On 9 May 2011 it was agreed that in respect of urgent matters and exceptional circumstances that may arise from time to time between meetings that the Pewsey Community Area Manager, in consultation with the Councillors of the Pewsey Area Board, be granted delegated authority to approve expenditure not exceeding £500 from the Pewsey Area Board budget. A report explaining any such decision and the reasons why it was considered to be urgent shall be reported to the next ordinary meeting of the Pewsey Area Board.
- 1.16. A budget ring-fenced for the needs of young people will again be made available in 2012/2013. How this will be allocated will be the decision of the area board.
- 1.17. Pewsey Area Board has a separate Community Area Transport Group (CATG) budget of £12,377 for 2012/13.

<p>Background documents used in the preparation of this Report</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Area Board Grant Guidance 2012/13 as presented for delegated decision • Pewsey Community Area Plan
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2. Main Considerations

- 2.1. Councillors will need to be satisfied that grants awarded in the 2012/13 year are made to projects that can realistically proceed within a year of the award being made.
- 2.2. There will be 6 rounds of funding during 2012/2013. The first was in May 2012 and the second is contained in this report, the remaining will take place on;
 - 10 September 2012
 - 12 November 2012
 - 14 January 2013
 - Date to be confirmed March 2013

3. Environmental & Community Implications

- 3.1. Area Board Grants contribute to the continuance and/or improvement of cultural, social and community activity and wellbeing in the community area, the extent and specifics of which will be dependent upon the individual project.

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1. Awards must fall within the Area Boards budget allocated to the Pewsey Area Board.
- 4.2. Since the last meeting a number of adjustments needed to be made to the balance, as follows:-

Balance following May grants - £30,405
Plus reimbursement from Burbage Village Hall as project didn't go ahead £2,500
Plus underspend from Jubilee Event held on 1 May £1,065
Less money ring fenced for Pewsey Station Project £10,000
Less Jubilee funding overpayment £25
Less PCAP Second tranche (to be claimed in Sept/Oct) £4,494

Balance £19,451

- 4.3. If grants are awarded in line with officer recommendations, Pewsey Area Board will have a balance of £14,811

5. Legal Implications

- 5.1. There are no specific Legal implications related to this report.

6. HR Implications

- 6.1. There are no specific HR implications related to this report.

7. Equality and Inclusion Implications

- 7.1. Community Area Grants and Small Grants will give local community and voluntary groups, town and parish council's equal opportunity to receive funding towards community based projects and schemes, where they meet the funding criteria.
- 7.2. Implications relating to individual grant applications are outlined within section 8 – "Officer Recommendations".

8. Officer recommendations

Ref	Applicant	Project proposal	Funding requested
8.1	Wootton Rivers Recreation Project	Upgrade and improve sports and recreational facilities	£5,000

- 8.1.1. Officer recommendation to approve a reduced amount of £2,140 for reasons set out in 8.1.4 below – Conditional upon the remaining funding being sought/ confirmed.
- 8.1.2. This application meets the grant criteria 2012/13
- 8.1.3. This application demonstrates a link to the Community Plan Page 24 6.6 – lack of activities for young people aged 8 years to 12 years, encouraging volunteering 6.11 and improving sports, play and leisure facilities 6.7
- 8.1.4. The applicant is Wootton Rivers Recreation Project and the recreation area is the responsibility of Wootton Rivers Parish Council. Therefore the criteria for Parish Councils needs to apply, and this sets out that the area board can only award as much as that contributed by the Parish Council which in this case is £1,600 plus a bequest of £540. £1,824 is being sought from A4A Community Grant but not yet confirmed.
- 8.1.5. The total project costs are £10,665
- 8.1.6. The recreation project wishes to improve the existing sports and recreational facilities in Wootton Rivers to satisfy the increasing popularity of recreation and leisure and cater for the demand from a wider age range of user. The recreation ground had fallen into disuse and six years ago, with the help of local volunteers has been turned into an attractive space, but the equipment now needs an upgrade.
- 8.1.7. If the Area Board decides not to fund this project then it will be delayed until funds are sought from elsewhere.

Ref	Applicant	Project proposal	Funding requested
8.2	St Michaels Parochial Church Council, Little Bedwyn	Bells Restoration	£5,000

8.2.1. Officer recommendation to award £2,500 which is less than requested due to the fact that this involves work to a Church, is not a priority for the board and there is a very small amount of funding available. Funding is conditional upon the remaining funding being sought/confirmed.

8.2.2. This application does not wholly meet the grant criteria 2012/13 as the criteria states “the council will not consider grant applications for political or religious activities” (an exception may be considered if the project can demonstrate a wide community benefit).

8.2.3 The applicant has set out in detail reasons why he feels an exception should apply (and that in his opinion the bells are not religious) as follows:-

Our contention is that bell-ringing is indeed a secular activity that today does not have an intrinsically religious character or significance. The bells that were recently installed on a river barge and rung for the Queen’s Jubilee river pageant event were part of a secular celebration, and as such, were echoed by bell ringers in bell towers across the land. The separate religious service for the Jubilee took place in St. Paul’s the following day. Bells have been described as the biggest music-making instruments in the world and in modern times bell ringing in England is heard primarily as a unique form of music-making and not a call to prayer. It is a cultural practice as English as “the thwack of leather on willow”.

The fact that bells are usually housed in a church tower and are also sometimes rung in connection with church services does not make bell ringing a religious activity per se. In different parts of the country change-ringing bells are also hung in university colleges, municipal buildings and even private houses and castles. The location of our bells in the church tower does however mean that we need to comply with the rules and regs of the building’s owners when carrying out works to keep the bells, and the frame and beams on which they are supported, and the room where the ringing takes place, in good order. This is why we have channelled the project through the Parochial Church Council and applied to the Diocese of Salisbury (a faith group ?) for permission to carry it out. The church building also serves as our village hall, and the bell tower also houses Little Bedwyn’s village clock, which strikes the hour for all to hear on the tenor bell. The budget for the bells project includes the costs of some repairs to the clock hammer mechanism and the weights pulleys. The clock is a public amenity to which all villagers have access.

There is little correlation between bell ringers and church goers. Of the group of fourteen new village bell ringers that we have provisionally identified for training, four are church-goers, and ten are not. In an earlier statement to the Area Board Grants Committee we readily acknowledged that the restored bells will on occasion be rung as an adjunct to church services. We estimate that this will be the case on about fifteen to eighteen occasions a year. We also estimate that the bells will be rung about forty-five times a year on occasions which have no religious significance or connection. (Most towers try to ring routinely on a weekday evening, but there will usually be breaks in this routine for holidays and such. The bells will also be rung for village events, and there will be occasional visits from bands of ringers from other towers). With or without any particular pretext, the pleasure of the ringers is in the ringing of the bells, and the pleasure of the community is in the hearing of them.

I hope these clarifications provide some factual backing for our assertion that bell-ringing is a secular activity, and that as such it does not contravene the prohibition that deters you from funding religious activities.

Community benefit

In earlier correspondence you asked me to strengthen our demonstration of the **community benefit** that accrues from the project.

- General enjoyment by the community : I repeat that in earlier times (1970s and 1980s in particular) the bells were rung for all the main village events, parties and celebrations whether local or national. I have lived in the village since 1968, and together with a few other old codgers can give personal testimony to this effect. We want to restore that added dimension of the sound of the bells to our community events.
- New and young ringers : We are determined to recruit and train a large band of new village ringers, once we have a new core band of adults we will introduce teenagers to the art and skills of ringing. This is one of the few activities that could potentially bring young people together in our village.
- Community involvement : We began to discuss the bells restoration project around the village early in 2011 and the project rapidly developed communal ownership. We have not yet circulated the appeal letter to local residents, but have already received over £2,000 in donations from villagers and friends. We expect virtually everyone in the villages of LB and Chisbury to contribute to the fund to a probable total of over £9,000. Some of this will be in relatively small amounts, but the important thing is that virtually everyone will give. There are approximately 250 residents in the civil Parish. and only 32 are on the Church Electoral Roll. It is hardly a church affair ! A community-organised Jumble Sale raised £950 last year, and a sponsored supper has raised nearly £500 so far this year. We expect to raise more from community events this year. The fund raising events are also a way of bringing the different generations of the community together.

Link to Area Community Plan

On the application form there was insufficient space for us to give a proper answer to the question : 'How does your project demonstrate a direct **link to the local community plan** for your area ?' We believe there is a very close alignment of the Little Bedwyn Bells project with the letter and spirit of the Pewsey Area Plan. The relevant passage in the actual wording of the plan is to be found in the preamble to section 6 on **Culture & Leisure** on page 24 :**The plan will seek to ensure that community facilities....and events are encouraged to maintain this public spirit in the villages and surrounding areas.**

The Little Bedwyn bells are one of our few community facilities and, when rung by members of the community they lend direct support to most of our community events. The community spirit is demonstrated by the widespread engagement of Little Bedwynites in the Bells project as participants : in helping to organise and administer it ; as donors and fund-raisers for it ; and subsequently as users and beneficiaries of it.

8.2.4 The applicant is the Parochial Church Council, the Bells are owned by the Church of England.

8.2.5 The total project costs are £44,928 - £5,000 has been confirmed from the Parochial Church Council Reserves, £1,000 from the Parish Council - There is £15,200 confirmed income and £24,700 provisional income.

8.2.6 There is no funding being provided by the Diocese or any other Church related

funders (as far as we know). Funding is still being sought .

Appendices:	Grant application forms (available to view online at http://cms.wiltshire.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=177&MId=6118&Ver=4)
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No unpublished documents have been relied upon in the preparation of this report.

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