

COMMUNITY ASSET TRANSFER

Two Properties at Mere

Executive Summary

This report deals with an application for the transfer of land at Steep Street and the Band Hut, Castle Street to be transferred to Mere Parish Council in accordance with Wiltshire Council's Community Asset Transfer Policy.

Proposal

The Area Board is asked to consider an application submitted by Mere Parish Council for the transfer of land at Steep Street and the Band Hut at Castle Street, Mere.

Reasons For Proposal

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

Recommendation

To approve the transfer subject to the matters referred to in paragraph 8 of the report.

Stephen Harris
South West Wiltshire Community Area Manager

SOUTH WEST WILTSHIRE AREA BOARD
6 FEBRUARY 2013

COMMUNITY ASSET TRANSFER

Two Properties at Mere

Purpose of Report

1. The Area Board is asked to consider an application submitted by Mere Parish Council for the transfer of land at Steep Street (see plan attached at Appendix 1) and the Band Hut, Castle Street, Mere (see plan at Appendix 2).

Background

2. 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.
3. 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.
4. 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.
5. 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

6. The proposal meets the requirements for consideration by the Area Board.
7. The Community Area Manager has consulted with Strategic Property Services, who have undertaken appropriate consultation with service departments across the Council. 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 Jeans, the local member, has been apprised.

The views of Council officers

8. 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.
 - 8.1 The Steep Street property is leased to Mere Croquet and Boules Club for ten years from 29th September 2009.
 - 8.2 Mere Parish Council has commissioned a condition survey of the Band Hut. This has identified various works required to bring it into repair. Mere Parish Council will be responsible for carrying out these works.
 - 8.3 The properties are to be transferred on the standard basis. This is that there will be a covenant restricting use of the properties to community purposes. If they should cease to be used for this purpose they will revert to Wiltshire Council.
 - 8.4 As the Steep Street land is let the rent, currently £500 per year, will be payable to Mere Parish Council instead of Wiltshire Council. Mere Parish Council will bear the cost of putting the Band Hut into repair and take over maintenance. Therefore, financial implications will be the loss of rent for Steep Street and the maintenance cost of the Band Hut previously incurred by Wiltshire Council being transferred to Mere Parish Council.

Recommendation

9. To approve the transfer subject to the matters referred to in paragraph 8 above.

Stephen Harris

South West Wiltshire Community Area Manager
