

Minutes

of a meeting of the

Abingdon and North East

Area Committee

held on Tuesday, 17 July 2018 at 7.00 pm

at the Meeting Room 1, 135 Eastern Avenue, Milton Park, Milton, OX14 4SB



Open to the public, including the press

Present:

Members: Councillors Mike Badcock (Chairman), Helen Pighills (Vice-Chairman), Ed Blagrove, Margaret Crick, Gervase Duffield, Debby Hallett, Robert Hall, Dudley Hoddinott, Vicky Jenkins, Monica Lovatt, Sandy Lovatt, Chris Palmer, Judy Roberts and Emily Smith

Officers: Carole Cumming, Kathy Deacon, Harry Gable and Nicola Meurer

Number of members of the public: 3

Ab.1 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Alice Badcock, Debby Hallett, Bob Johnston and Catherine Webber.

Ab.2 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 March 2018 were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting and were signed by the Chairman.

Ab.3 Declarations of interest

Councillor Dudley Hoddinott declared that he was a member of North Hinksey PCC and that he would step down from the committee when the item was considered, to enable him to speak in support of their application.

Ab.4 Urgent business and chairman's announcements

None.

Ab.5 Public participation

Speakers representing the applicants were present for three of the applications. They would speak when their application was under consideration, and also had the opportunity to respond to questions of clarification from the committee.

In the case of Damascus PCC, who had made funding applications to both the capital grants and NHB schemes for the same project, it was decided that they could address the committee for both applications at the same time in the interest of avoiding duplication.

The speakers were as follows:

North Hinksey PCC: Dudley Hoddinott.

Damascus PCC: Fred Cubbage, accompanied by Helen Kendrick.

Abingdon Rowing Club: Reverend Kevin Mentzel.

Ab.6 Community Grants

All Saints Methodist Church Abingdon

The officer introduced the application by All Saints Methodist Church Abingdon for a capital grant of £7,500 towards a £130,910 project to refurbish the existing toilet facilities in the church. Officers had recommended that any grant awarded should be conditional upon agreement from the applicants that:

- no work can start until they have a contract for the works and have secured all the funding needed to fund the whole project;
- they consider the equality and sustainability feedback contained within the officer's report and implement any suggestions where physically possible.

No speakers were present for this application. The committee debated the item.

RESOLVED:

- 1. To approve the officer's recommended score of 7 points out of a possible 9.**
- 2. To approve the officer's recommended grant of 5.73 per cent of the total cost, capped to £7,500, the amount requested by the applicants. This grant was subject to the conditions listed above.**

North Hinksey PCC (St. Peter and Paul Church)

The officer introduced the application by North Hinksey PCC for a grant of £1,117 towards a £2,234 project to replace the existing kitchen at St. Peter and Paul Church, as well as installing hand dryers and fireguards.

Councillor Dudley Hoddinott stood down from the committee and did not vote on the item. He spoke in favour of the application as a member of North Hinksey PCC. and
Vale of White Horse District Council – Abingdon Area Committee minutes

gave his view that this project would deliver much needed health and safety work in the church, allowing it to continue to be used as a venue for several different community groups.

The committee debated the item.

RESOLVED:

- 1. To approve the officer's recommended score of 5 points out of a possible 9.**
- 2. To approve the officer's recommended grant of 37.50 per cent of the total cost, capped to £838, £279 less than the amount requested.**

Damascus PCC

The officer introduced the application by Damascus PCC for a grant of £30,000 towards a £508,697 project to create a church hall in Sutton Courtenay. Officers had recommended that any grant awarded should be conditional upon agreement from the applicants that:

- no work should start until the council's grant agreement is complete, they have completed their tender process and have secured all the funding needed.
- they must consider the equality and sustainability feedback contained within the officer's report and implement any suggestions where possible.

The officer also advised that there was Neighbourhood Plan in progress which may identify a need for more community space, and whether this project was the community's preferred solution.

Fred Cubbage, of Damascus PCC, spoke in favour of the application and answered questions from the committee. He provided an update on the finances of the PCC, and spoke of how Sutton Courtenay is currently lacking in appropriate space and facilities to hold community events. This in turn was negatively impacting on community identity, which the creation of a new church hall would address. He pointed out that the Neighbourhood Plan was still in the early stages of consultation and as such any deferral until this was complete would mean a serious delay in the delivery of this project.

The committee debated the item. It was noted that the applicant had submitted applications to both the capital grant and NHB schemes, but procedure rules state that a project may only be funded from one of these. Accordingly, the committee decided to consider this item as a capital application, to allow for the best possible allocation of budget.

RESOLVED:

- 1. To approve the officer's recommended score of 4 points out of a possible 9.**
- 2. To approve the officer's recommended grant of 4.42 per cent of the total cost, capped to £22,500, £7,500 less than the amount requested. This grant was subject to the conditions listed above.**
- 3. To reject the application for a grant from the NHB scheme, due to the grant awarded from the capital budget.**

Abingdon Squash and Racketball Club

The officer introduced the application by Abingdon Squash and Racketball Club for a grant of £9,510 towards a £19,021 project to purchase and install a boiler, water heater, kitchen and changing room furniture at the club.

No speakers were present for this application.

The committee debated the item. During the discussion, they questioned the following:

- Are the loans that they have received from members interest free? If not, is there a risk that grant money could in fact be used for repayment?
- Given the feedback from the council's equalities officer, how does the club propose to improve accessibility and make the club more open to all members of the community?

The committee reflected that answers to these questions were fundamental to any decision to award a grant. In the absence of anyone representing the applicant, the committee decided to defer the application to give the officers time to gather further information from the club.

RESOLVED:

- 1. To defer consideration of this application until a future meeting in order to gain further information from the applicant.**

Abingdon Rowing Club

The officer introduced the application by Abingdon Rowing Club for a grant of £5,078 towards a £10,156 project to purchase two new boats and accompanying blades, to be used primarily by junior members of the club. Officers had recommended that any grant awarded should be conditional upon agreement from the applicants that they consider the equalities feedback contained in the report and implement any suggestions where possible.

Reverend Kevin Mentzel, of Abingdon Rowing Club, spoke in favour of the application and answered questions from the committee. He outlined the great contribution that rowing can make towards helping young people, since it facilitates team work and builds character. Funding two new boats would allow four new rowers to participate in activity at any one time, which could total 24 people a week over the six sessions that they run.

The committee debated the item.

RESOLVED:

- 1. To approve the officer's recommended score of 4 points out of a possible 9.**
- 2. To approve the officer's recommended grant of 37.50 per cent of the total cost, capped to £3,809, £1,269 less than the amount requested. This grant was subject to the conditions listed above.**

TrinityLearning

The officer introduced the application by Trinity Learning for a grant of £2,295 towards a £4,590 project to purchase office furniture and IT equipment for their base at Trinity Church in Abingdon. The officer advised the following:

- Some items that have been applied for are available cheaper elsewhere and therefore it is recommended that the applicants review their choice of suppliers/brands if a grant is awarded.
- The organisation is currently in the process of transferring to become a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO). This would mean that the items that the committee would be funding will be transferred to a new organisation if a grant was awarded. Officers could not be certain that this new organisation would be eligible for the council's grant scheme, and therefore recommended that this application be deferred for consideration at a later date.

There were no speakers present for this item, although the applicants had provided a written submission in favour of their application which was circulated to the committee prior to the meeting.

The committee debated the item.

RESOLVED:

- 1. To defer consideration of this application until the upcoming transfer to a CIO structure is complete.**

The meeting closed at 8.15 pm