

Minutes

of a meeting of the

West Area Committee

held at 7.00 pm on Monday, 25 November 2013

at the Council Chamber, The Abbey House, Abingdon



Open to the public, including the press

Present:

Members: Councillor Yvonne Constance, Anthony Hayward (Vice-Chairman), Simon Howell (Chairman), Mohinder Kainth, Robert Sharp, Alison Thomson and Elaine Ware

Officers: Jayne Bolton, Carole Cumming, Susan Harbour and Sally Truman

Number of members of the public: 7

We.16 Apologies for absence

Councillors Roger Cox and Melinda Tilley sent their apologies.

We.17 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 22 April 2013 were approved as an accurate record and were signed by the chairman.

We.18 Declarations of interest

No disclosable pecuniary interests were declared.

Councillors Elaine Ware and Simon Howell are on the trustees of Viscountess Barrington Memorial Hall and would, therefore, step down from the committee for this item; Councillor Anthony Hayward would chair the meeting for this item.

Councillor Alison Thompson is the chairman of the Faringdon Pre-School and would step down from the committee for this item. She would then address the committee on behalf of the applicant but would take no part in the decision making.

Councillor Anthony Hayward knows the applicant of the Oxford Garden Project and would step down from the committee for this item.

We.19 Urgent business and chairman's announcements

None.

We.20 Statements, petitions and questions from the public relating to matters affecting the West Area Committee

Mark Crane spoke on behalf of Faringdon Free Food. He informed the committee that the project involved schools and community groups and was entirely run by volunteers.

Keira Bentley spoke on behalf of Harmony Inspires a women's barbershop style singing group.

- The membership of the group is from across the Vale but the majority of performances take place in the West area. The applicant have raised funds from other organisations;
- Average attendances are between 35 – 40 women;
- There is an open door policy in rehearsals;
- The group will be operating a learn to sing course next year;
- Membership is £12 per month.

Four members of the group treated the committee to a song.

Alison Thompson, chairman of Faringdon Pre-School, spoke on behalf of this applicant.

- The pre-school is a not-for-profit organisation;
- There are 34 children using the pre-school at present, capacity is 40;
- There is a significant hole in the floor by the door, and the pre-school are not able to find the building guarantee;
- A large proportion of the organisations reserves are required for salaries and redundancies;
- Faringdon Town Council is now not giving funding, but this will be made up with an Early Years grant from Oxfordshire County Council.

We.21 Capital community grants

Capital Community Grants update

The committee considered the head of corporate strategy's report updating on projects previously funded by the committee. This showed the amount awarded by the committee for each project and whether the project was complete.

The committee noted that from the two years 2012-13 and 2013-14:

- Four projects had been completed;
- Two projects have not started, reminders have been sent and officers are awaiting updates from the projects;
- One project has withdrawn its application but will submit new applications for each phase of the project.

Capital Community Grants.

The committee considered the head of corporate strategy's report. This set out details of seven applications for capital community grants. The report also set out the financial position, there being £18,964 remaining in the current year's budget,

The committee considered each application carefully, assessing it against the grants criteria and awarding grants as follows:

Applicant	Project	Grant	Comments
Faringdon Pre-School	Building repairs	£2,500	To award the grant subject to a satisfactory structural survey
Faringdon Free Food	Central Faringdon planting	£506	Received private company donations and funding from the Joint Economic Forum. Committee questioned if this is double funding as the Joint Economic Forum is part funded by the district council, but the council's contribution to the Forum is very low and the grant currently being applied for is project specific
Viscountess Barrington Memorial Hall	Refurbishment of small hall toilets	£3,635	
Harmony Inspires	Purchase of risers for performance	£4,233	If the committee grants the award the applicant will be able to order risers immediately given their other funding. Five sets of risers are required
The Oxford Garden Project	Bring a redundant building into community use	£5,000	To award the grant subject to a satisfactory lease being in place with the social enterprise for at least five years.
Longworth Parish Council	Allotments	£1,000	
Headway Oxfordshire	Extend existing facilities	£1,195	This project has Vale wide benefit and therefore the allocation has been split evenly between the four area committees.

We.22 New Homes Bonus - community funding 2013/14

The committee considered the head of corporate strategy's report that set out the council's policy and procedure to allocate the new homes bonus in 2013/14. Cabinet had prepared this with help from the Scrutiny Committee.

The area committee noted that it would be considering applications for grants under this separate scheme at its next meeting on Tuesday 4 February 2014. The committee would have a budget of £39,800 to allocate for this purpose in 2013/14. The amount was a share of the council's £100,000 budget, based on the growth in the number of band "D" equivalent properties in the West Area of the district. The apportionment methodology had been agreed by the Cabinet member for grants.

Although the grant may cover both revenue and capital costs, the monies are part of the council's revenue budget and therefore cannot be carried forward to future financial years.

The closing date for applications in this round is 30 November 2013.

All applications will be summarised in the Vale Information Sheet for councillors to feed back.

In future years, both the New Homes Bonus funds and the Capital Community Grants funds will be scheduled together to make applications and decision making more straightforward.

The meeting closed at 8.40 pm