

Minutes

of a meeting of the

Wantage Area Committee

held on Monday, 18 January 2016 at 6.30 pm
at The Beacon, Portway, Wantage, OX12 9BY



Open to the Public, including the Press

Present:

Members: Councillors St John Dickson (Chairman), Ben Mabbett (Vice-Chairman), Matthew Barber, Yvonne Constance, Charlotte Dickson, Jenny Hannaby, Chris McCarthy, Janet Shelley, Reg Waite and Elaine Ware

Officers: Steve Culliford, Carole Cumming and Sophie Milton

Number of members of the public: 7

Wa.1 Apologies for absence

Councillors Mike Murray and Julia Reynolds had sent their apologies for absence.

Wa.2 Declarations of interest

None

Wa.3 Urgent business

None

Wa.4 Terms of reference

The committee noted its terms of reference and the revised area committee boundary as set by the Council.

Wa.5 Statements, petitions and questions from the public relating to matters affecting the committee

The following members of the public each addressed the committee, making statements in support of their grant applications:

- Jo Harvey on behalf of Sustainable Wantage
- Sarah Shackleton on behalf of Grove Parish Church
- Richard Kennell on behalf of South Oxfordshire Food and Education Alliance (SOFEA)
- Sue Hannon on behalf of Letcombe Regis Parish Council
- Sarah Lloyd on behalf of West Hendred Parish Council

Wa.6 New Homes Bonus and Capital Grants 2015/16

The committee considered the head of corporate strategy's report on new homes bonus grants and capital grants. The council had received seven applications for new homes bonus grants relating to the Wantage area, and five applications for capital grants.

New Homes Bonus grant applications

Each new homes bonus grant application had been assessed against the new homes bonus grants criteria and scoring matrix. The officer's recommended scores were set out in the report. The committee assessed the applications against the grants criteria and the officer's recommended scores, and revised the scores where marked with an asterisk (*) in the table below.

The committee noted that Sustainable Wantage had withdrawn the part of its application relating to heating and insulation of its premises until it had agreed a longer lease. Its application was now for funds towards the cost of its centre manager.

New Homes Bonus grant applicants	Scoring (each category scored out of 3)					
	Percentage of new housing in project area	Community benefit	New facilities or activities	Funding the project	Applicant's own contribution	Total
Sustainable Wantage	2	3*	3*	1	1	10*
Blewbury Parish Council	1	3	2	1	2	9
Grove Scout Group	1	2	2	3	2	10
Grove Parish Church	1	3	3*	2	1	10*
South Oxfordshire Food and Education Alliance (SOFEA)	2	3*	2	2*	1	10*
South and Vale Carers	3	3*	1	2	2	11*
My Life My Choice	2	3*	2	3	1	11*

The committee noted that those new homes bonus applications scoring a total of 10 or more were in the high priority funding bracket and could be awarded a grant of 100 per cent of the requested amount. Those applications scoring 9 or less fell in to the medium

priority funding bracket and could be awarded a grant of up to 75 per cent of the requested amount. The committee awarded the new homes bonus grants accordingly.

Capital grant applications

The committee noted that Blewbury Parish Council had applied for grants for the same village hall refurbishment project under both the new homes bonus and capital grants schemes. The reason for this was to increase its chances of being awarded a grant if the first application failed. The parish council had been advised that it could only be awarded a grant from one of the council's grant schemes for the same project. As the parish council had been awarded a grant for its village hall refurbishment project under the new homes bonus grant scheme above, its application for a capital grant was automatically refused and not considered by the committee.

Each capital grant application had been assessed against the capital grants criteria and scoring matrix. The officer's recommended scores were set out in the report. The committee assessed the applications against the grants criteria and the officer's recommended scores, and revised the scores where marked with an asterisk (*) in the table below:

Capital grant applicants	Scoring (each category scored out of 3)				
	New facilities or activities	Community benefit	Funding the project	Applicant's own contribution	Total
Childrey Village Hall	3	3	3	1	10
Letcombe Regis Parish Council	2	3	3	3	11
West Hendred Parish Council	1	2	3	3	9
Grove Parish Church	3*	3	2	1	9*
Childrey Parish Council	1	3	3	2	9

The committee noted that those capital applications scoring a total of 9 or more were in the high priority funding bracket and could be awarded a grant of 100 per cent of the requested amount. The committee awarded capital grants accordingly.

Further grant applications in 2015/16

The committee noted that the last opportunity for organisations to submit grant applications in the current financial year had now passed. As there had been only two

applications for the Wantage area, the committee agreed that these could be determined under delegated authority rather than holding a further committee meeting.

Grants policy and procedure

The committee was asked for its views on the current grant policies and procedures. The committee thanked the officers for their work in improving the grants system but suggested the following changes:

- the officer's report should set out the budget available to the committee both for this round and the potential budget remaining for future rounds according to officer recommendation
- where a minority group would benefit from a project, the maximum score should be awarded for community benefit
- where a project had several different elements, the report should show a breakdown of costs for each element
- the grants budgets should be awarded to area committees annually, rather than being re-apportioned after each round of grant applications

RESOLVED: to

(a) award new homes bonus grants as follows:

Applicant	Project	Grant
Sustainable Wantage	Centre manager	£1,920
Blewbury Parish Council	Village hall refurbishment part 1	£7,500
Grove Scout Group	Replacement and additional mess tents	£1,000
Grove Parish Church	Church hall insulation, lighting improvements and audio visual equipment	£18,000
South Oxfordshire Food and Education Alliance (SOFEA)	'Futures Placed' recruitment service linked to the 'Get to Work' programme	£3,507
South and Vale Carers' Centre	Replacement laptop computers	£859
My Life My Choice	Expanding support groups	£883
		Total £33,669

(b) award capital grants as follows:

Applicant	Project	Grant
Childrey Village Hall	Cinema night equipment	£1,500
Letcombe Regis Parish Council	Village hall landscaping and parking	£18,603
West Hendred Parish Council	Replacement toddler swings	£1,784
Grove Parish Church	Church hall window replacement	£20,000
Childrey Parish Council	Access route to village hall across the village green	£1,023
		Total

		£42,910
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- (c) refuse the capital grant application from Blewbury Parish Council towards its village hall refurbishment part 1 as it has been awarded a new homes bonus grant for this project;
- (d) authorise the head of corporate strategy, following consultation with the committee chairman, to determine grant applications received during the last round (from Letcombe Regis Riding Club a maximum of £10,000 and Wantage Silver Band, a maximum of £2,500) and to cancel the committee meeting scheduled for 7 March 2016; and
- (e) request the Cabinet member responsible for grants to consider the following changes to the grants system:
 - the officer's report should set out the budget available to the committee both for this round and the potential budget remaining for future rounds according to officer recommendation
 - where a minority group would benefit from a project, the maximum score should be awarded for community benefit
 - where a project had several different elements, the report should show a breakdown of costs for each element
 - the grants budgets should be awarded to area committees annually, rather than being re-apportioned after each round of grant applications

The meeting closed at 7.55 pm