

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL
MEETING OF THE NHB COMMUNITY GRANTS PANEL

17TH AUGUST 2016 AT 4.00 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors S. J. Baxter, L. C. R. Mallett, K.J. May and P.L. Thomas
Officers: Ms. J. Pickering and Ms. A. Scarce

7/16 **WELCOME**

Councillor Sue Baxter took the lead at the meeting, introducing the other Members and Officers and welcomed the public and applicants that were in attendance.

It was noted that an apology for absence had been received from Councillor Geoff Denaro, and that Councillor Phil Thomas was attending as his substitute.

8/16 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

9/16 **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Councillor Baxter gave a brief overview of the New Homes Bonus Community Grants Scheme and explained the purpose of this meeting was to give each applicant a five minute time slot in which to present their application and respond to questions from Members.

Councillor Baxter reiterated that a decision would not be made at this meeting, but applicants would be advised of the Panel's recommendations within 10 working days and a final decision would be made by Cabinet at its meeting to be held on 7th September 2016.

10/16 **SCORING MATRIX**

It was explained that each Member had been provide with a copy of the Scoring Matrix for each application. Following the public meeting, the Panel would consider these in more detail and they would form the basis of the recommendations which the Panel would make the Cabinet.

It was highlighted that a decision as to whether the Panel would recommend any application for consideration by Cabinet at its meeting on 7th September would not be announced at the meeting. Applicants would be advised of the outcome within 10 working days, with the notes

and recommendations from the meeting also being published on the Council's website within that time frame.

11/16 **PRESENTATION TIMETABLE**

The timetable highlighted when each application would be considered.

12/16 **SUMMARIES OF APPLICATIONS**

Application 1 – Resurface and re-mark playground (Fairfield First School)

In the absence of a representative from the School being attending to present the report, the Executive Director, Finance and Resources highlighted the salient points of the application.

Members raised a number of points including whether it was relevant to the NHB Community Grants Scheme to fund a project which was ostensibly a Worcestershire County Council matter. Concerns were also raised as to what the options would be were the funds from the Council not be granted.

Application 2 – Hagley Community Pavilion (Hagley Football Club/Hagley Parish Council)

The Chairman of Hagley Parish Council together with Chairman of the Football Club attended the meeting to present this joint application. A comprehensive overview of the application was given which included the history of the Club, the number of attendees and the variety of teams, together with the support it had received from the Football Association and Football Federation and other funding sources. There were over 60 volunteer coaches, 200 supporters and over 150 visiting teams. Other activities would also be able to take place within the new pavilion to enable it to be used as a community space. Comprehensive information was provided to support the benefit to the local community. It would be the only purpose built community space in Hagley and it was believed that 40% of those in the area would make use of it.

The Panel asked a number of questions of both Chairmen in order to understand the relationship between the Parish Council and Football Club and the details of the financial arrangements, as the overall cost of the project was some 3206k, with a significant contribution from the FA which needed to be spent within a set timescale and £90k being underwritten by the Parish Council. It was clarified that the whilst the building would be the ownership of the Parish Council, there was written agreement to ensure that the Football Club had use of it, this had been part of the terms and conditions of funding being received from the Football Federation. That formal agreement was already in place.

Application 3 – Purchase of new minibus (Hagley Ramblers Scouts Group)

Mr. Jim Austin, Scout Leader attended the meeting to present the application and respond to questions from the Panel. Mr. Austin provided background information about the Hagley Ramblers Scout Group and the Scouting movement, together with the number and age range of its members. The Panel were also advised that there was a waiting list of 50 at the current time. He emphasised the need for a further minibus in order to transport the ever growing numbers to activities. In previous years he had taken the minibus to different parts of Europe with the young people to participate in a number of activities. Mr. Austin also highlighted the merits of the Scouting movement together with the positive impact on the local community.

The Panel raised a number of questions in respect of the additional funding that was needed and how this would be raised. Clarification was also sought in respect of the balances in the Group's accounts and it was confirmed that it was the intention to use these for the purpose of replacing the current headquarters. It was confirmed that the bid was for a replacement minibus, as the current one was very old and well use and unlikely to pass its MOT in the near future. Other funds would be sourced in order to buy an additional vehicle.

Application 4 – Refurbishment of Kitchen (Cofton Hackett Village Hall)

In the absence of a representative from Cofton Hackett Village Hall attending to present the application, the Panel considered the information which had been provided. In so doing, a number of questions was raised which officers were asked to seek clarification on from the Village Hall prior to the bid being given further consideration by the Panel.

Application 5 – Hut Refurbishment (Bromsgrove 6th Scout Group)

Mr. Ian Jones, Chairman of the Catshill 6th Scout Group presented the application for funds towards the refurbishment of the hut. It was confirmed that in 2015/16 the Panel had given a grant which had gone some way towards this refurbishment project. It was hoped that with further work, the Group would be able to offer the hut for community use at an affordable price, but also allowing them to raise additional funds. Currently the Group was small, but it was anticipated that with further investment it would be able to increase those numbers.

During questioning it was confirmed that the building was in fact owned by the District Council. It was some 30 years old and the Group paid a peppercorn rent but were responsible for its maintenance. The Panel asked whether the Group had carried out any market research to see whether there was the need for additional space by the community or whether alternative funding sources had been investigated. Councillor Helen Jones had endorsed the application and it was confirmed that she was a member of its committee.

Application 6 – Practice Net Area Refurbishment (Barnt Green Cricket Club)

In the absence of a representative from the Cricket Club attending to present the application the Panel asked officers to seek clarification on the exact amount of the amount being requested together with what funds were in place to bridge the gap between the amount of grant requested and the total cost of the project, which was stated as £9,720.

Application 7 – School Ground Redevelopment (Belbroughton Church of England Primary School)

In the absence of a representative from the School being present the Panel discussed the merits of the applications. Concerns were raised in respect of the relationship between the Primary School and a bid which had been considered in the previous round in respect of the same site. It was also noted that the Ward Councillor had not endorsed the application being considered at this meeting. Before considering the application further, the Panel requested that officers seek clarification and confirmation as to whether the Ward Councillor had been approached for endorsement of this particular project.

Application 8 – Stoke Wharf Picnic Site (Stoke Parish Council)

Mr. Neil Gulliver, the Clerk for Stoke Parish Council attended the meeting to present the application. Mr. Gulliver provided relevant background information and explained that this was part of a programme of improving facilities across the Parish, this included improvements to play areas for example. The area in question was the responsibility of Worcestershire County Council, jointly with both the Harris Brush Company and the Parish Council. Unfortunately there had been little interest from the other parties and the Parish Council were now seeking to make improvements and responsibility for the area.

The Panel commented that the Parish Council had significant funds in its balances and Mr. Gulliver acknowledged this, advising that whilst the majority would be used for the running of the Council the remainder was to be used for improvements throughout the Parish. Members asked for full details of the proposed projects before considering the application further.

Application 9 – Refurbishment of Toilet Block (Catshill Village Hall)

Mrs. Jill Bate a Trustee of the Catshill Village Hall attended the meeting in order to present the application. She provided background information as to the history of the Hall, which had been built in 1897 together with details of the users of the Hall (it was occupied 80% of the time by regulars) and its contribution to the local community. It was confirmed that the Catshill Village Hall was a charitable trust which tried to adjust its fees to hirers' needs wherever possible.

The Panel asked Mrs. Bate about the relationship with the Parish Council and whether it had been approached to contribute to the work that was needed. This was something which would be considered and that the relationship with the Parish Council was becoming increasingly close and building on working in partnership was being looked at in more detail for the future. Members were also informed that the Village Hall was well used within Catshill and the surrounding areas. It did not have huge financial resources, but it was considering employing a Manager to promote the Hall more and build on the current user base.

The meeting closed at 5.15 p.m.

Chairman