

## Grant Request: Memorial Social Centre

In May 2020 the Parish Council considered a proposal (**WPC.20.05.05**) to assist the Memorial Social Centre to improve its ICT connectivity (**Min. 20.05.16 refers**).

The Chair of the Wickhambrook Memorial Social Centre has submitted a formal request for financial support to the parish council (attached as Appendix A), to cover:

- the cost of purchasing and installing two repeaters within the building to ensure full coverage across the whole building (£150.00); and
- the purchase of a large screen wall mounted TV which would be used to display documents, presentations, and video demonstrations etc, to be sited in the Dulcie Smith Room which is accessed by a separate locked door (£350.00).

The benefits to the community have been summarised as, more functionality enabling a wider range of community events, access for charitable meetings, hiring for small business seminars, acting as a local training centre for local businesses, and a secure connected area for health staff during flu inoculation programmes and any emergency response/rest centre activities.

The Parish Council has a number of powers under which this grant could be made:

- Ancillary power – to do anything that will facilitate, be conducive to or incidental to the discharge of its powers and functions (S.111 Local Government Act 1972)
- Community Centres – power to
  - provide and equip buildings for use of clubs having athletic, social or educational objectives (S.19 LG(MP)A 1976
  - acquire, provide and furnish community buildings for public meetings and assemblies (s.133 LGA 1972)
- Conference facilities – power to provide and encourage the use of facilities in the council's area (s.144 LGA 1972)
- Public buildings and village halls – power to provide buildings for public meetings and assemblies or contribute towards the expenses of providing such buildings (s.133 LGA 1972)

The parish council has £526.50 in unspent allocated funds for the support of local organisations in the current financial year. A further £800 has been received in compensation from the council's former bank, which could be allocated to the budget line grants, local support and village organisations.

The move to remote meeting technology during the pandemic has brought benefits to the parish council, (sharing documentation supporting items on the agenda on screen) and supporting the MSC proposal would facilitate greater accessibility for members of the public to documents supporting decision making at public meetings in future.

### **Recommendation:**

**To authorise a grant contribution to the value of £500 towards the cost ensuring reliable internet access throughout the building, and the installation of a wide-screen TV in one of its meeting rooms.**

To the Clerk of the Wickhambrook Parish Council

I have been making various enquiries about providing wifi in the MSC as per the previous PC meeting minutes.

I am pleased to say that I can get a package via Plusnet that will give **free** installation and **a free** router, but this does not include repeater stations which will be necessary to ensure that the signal is available throughout the building. I estimate we would need two repeaters.

Why are these repeaters needed? As you know the MSC is a large building with thick dividing walls which means that the wifi signal would not reach every room. That is dangerous in an emergency and, as the local doctor's surgery are planning on using the hall for a series of flu-jab clinics, could cause them some difficulties as they need on-line access to medical record wherever they are positioned.

The repeaters are approx. £36 each and will need a high-level socket to be wired in near to each repeater by an electrician. These repeaters do plug into a socket, but we fear these would quickly disappear if they were at normal floor level as they are easy to remove. We would plan therefore to fix each repeater high up on the walls or ceiling to solve this problem.

I would like to get this started and would ask if the Parish Council would provide a one-off grant of £500.00 which comprises of:

- £150 for the purchase and the wiring-in at high level of the repeater equipment. That would enable full wifi in the hall within the next 4 weeks. The MSC would then pay all future monthly line costs on this service and any additional ongoing insurance and maintenance costs.
- £350 for a large screen TV which would be used to display documents, presentations, and video demonstrations etc. This would be placed in the Dulcie Smith Room which is accessed by a separate locked door, thus improving safety and security. It would be attached to the wall. We believe that this equipment would enable the wider Wickhambrook Community to use this room for meetings, training, educational events and also as a communication centre in the event of a local emergency. The MSC would agree to bear the cost of insurance, tv licence, and any ongoing maintenance or repair costs.

The benefits to the community can be summarised as, more functionality therefore enabling a wider range of community events, access for charitable meetings, hiring for small business seminars, acting as a local training centre for local businesses, and a secure connected area for health staff during flu and (hopefully) Covid 19 inoculation programmes.

Could I ask, if at all possible, that the Parish Council make a decision on this £500 grant application before their next meeting as there is a time delay from order to completion of installation and wifi is required for the first round of flu-inoculations that will be carried out next month..

Steve Thwaite,  
Chair Wickhambrook MSC Trustees.  
17<sup>th</sup> August 2020