

District Councillor's Report Jan 24th 2022 - Cllr Tom Bygott

Platinum Jubilee Village Hall Fund

Village halls in England can now apply for grants to improve and modernise their facilities through the Platinum Jubilee Village Hall Fund. Village halls interested in applying for this national scheme can request grants from £7,500 to £75,000, and up to a maximum of 20 per cent of eligible project costs. Capital grants will be allocated to support infrastructure improvements, the refurbishment of facilities, such as kitchens and toilets, and measures to improve energy efficiency. The application window opened just before Christmas and will close on 20 January 2023. It is anticipated by the Government that the successful applicants will be able to draw on the funding from April 2023.

More information is available at:

www.gov.uk/government/news/village-halls-to-see-major-revamp-as-platinum-jubilee-fund-opens

Consultation on the National Planning Policy Framework

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is a document produced by central government as guidance for local authorities in making planning decisions. Its most recent version was published last July: www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2

On 22 December, the Government launched a consultation to seek views on its latest proposed changes to the NPPF. Some of the suggested changes would strengthen the position of neighbourhood plans and also allow local authorities to impose time limits for development consent where developers are involved in 'lank banking' - the practice of increasing the value of their companies by seeking ever more new permissions while not building or delaying the progress on existing permissions. It also contains some suggestions from the Building Better, Building Beautiful Commission

www.gov.uk/government/groups/building-better-building-beautiful-commission

The consultation closes on 2nd March: www.gov.uk/government/consultations/levelling-up-and-regeneration-bill-reforms-to-national-planning-policy

New funding for defibrillators

On 29 December, the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) announced £1 million of funding to increase the number of automated external defibrillators in communities – providing an estimated 1,000 new defibrillators in community spaces in England. DHSC will invest the funding through an independent partner who will manage grant applications from bidding organisations. Those selected will be asked to match the funding they receive fully or partially, potentially doubling the number of new defibrillators created by the fund. Applicants will also be asked to demonstrate that defibrillators will be placed in areas where they are most needed. Examples could include town halls, community centres, local shops, post offices and local parks to ensure that defibrillators are evenly spread throughout communities and easily accessible if someone is experiencing cardiac arrest. The independent partner managing the fund will be announced in due course. The fund is non-recurring, meaning DHSC will provide funding for the purchase of defibrillators, but upkeep will be funded by organisations or individuals who receive them. State-funded schools in England that do not already have a defibrillator will receive one from the Department for Education by the end of 2022/23 academic year.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/number-of-defibrillators-to-be-increased-with-new-funding>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/every-school-will-have-a-life-saving-defibrillator-by-2023>

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