

New Community Centre Working Group

Tue, Nov 25, 2025

Summary:

The discussion centred on the challenges faced in securing lottery funding for the community centre, primarily due to insufficient clarity on how the project would address issues of discrimination and poverty. James proposed that a smaller funding request might enhance their chances of approval, while Richard emphasized the need for social initiatives to combat community isolation. The group acknowledged the importance of community engagement, highlighting existing programs like the pop-up cafe that foster social interaction among residents. James also mentioned the potential of using research to bolster future funding applications, underlining the significance of building social capital within the community.

Financial updates revealed that the community project has approximately three-quarters of a million available, primarily from reserves and borrowing. Richard discussed the possibility of utilizing public art funds for the new facility's interior design, while the Parish Clerk stressed the need to revisit an art strategy that previously lacked community input. James expressed optimism regarding the council's willingness to consider their consultation document for future planning. The status of various funding applications was also reviewed, including a significant one from the Margaret Powell Fund, which has advanced to the next stage.

The need for improved football facilities in Hanslope was highlighted, with James noting that the current pavilion and clubhouse do not meet community demands. He is developing a business case to present to the Football Foundation and Berks and Bucks FA, emphasizing that inadequate facilities hinder the growth of sports, particularly for girls and disability football. The group discussed potential funding opportunities from various sources and the importance of collaboration between the Football Club and the Parish Council.

Additionally, they explored the offerings at the community centre, including fitness classes and a café, while addressing concerns about the sports hall's dimensions and the logistics of temporary accommodation during construction. The meeting concluded with a commitment to continue discussions on financial aspects and community engagement strategies.

Chapters & Topics:

Funding Strategies and Community Engagement

The discussion centred on the difficulties in obtaining lottery funding for the community centre, with James noting that the rejection was due to insufficient clarity on addressing social issues. Richard proposed submitting a smaller funding request, which the group found worth pursuing. They acknowledged the importance of addressing community isolation and the need for more social initiatives.

* Lottery funding application strategies and challenges.

* Collaboration between the parish council and local organizations for funding opportunities.

* Community needs and the importance of social facilities.

Financial Updates and Funding Opportunities

James Gregory reported that the current financial outlook for the community project stands at around three-quarters of a million, with significant contributions from reserves and borrowing. Richard Wallond mentioned that public art funds could potentially be requested for interior enhancements. The Parish Clerk highlighted reviewing an outdated art strategy imposed on the community, suggesting that it may not align with current needs.

* Public art funding and its implications for local projects.

Football Facility Development Discussion

James Gregory outlined the challenges faced by Hanslope Football Club due to inadequate facilities, including a lack of space for spectators and no public toilets. He is tasked with building a business case to lobby the Football Foundation and Berks and Bucks FA for funding to support the development of a larger pavilion and additional pitches, as the current setup is insufficient for the growing number of teams.

* The necessity of a business case for sports facility improvements.

Funding Opportunities and Project Collaboration

The Parish Clerk is developing a Pitch Maintenance funding application that is awaiting approval, with hopes of securing over nine thousand pounds. James Gregory emphasized the need for collaboration between the Club and the Parish Council to strengthen their partnership. Richard Wallond proposed considering alternative storage solutions and leveraging funds to enhance community facilities.

Discussion on Community Engagement and Project Feasibility

James Gregory suggested bringing in local parents to represent their needs regarding the new community centre, particularly those facing isolation. The group also considered reaching out to Hanslope Park to discuss their role in the community, although there were concerns about their previous lack of engagement. The Parish Clerk noted that while Hanslope Park has shown some willingness to volunteer in the past, their overall connection to the village remains tenuous.

Community Centre Facilities and Temporary Accommodation Planning

The group discussed various activities that could be hosted at the community centre, such as fitness classes and a café, which would help generate revenue. Richard Wallond noted that the current sports hall dimensions may limit its use for badminton, while James Gregory suggested that improved facilities could lead to more bookings and the possibility of applying for revenue grants. The conversation also touched on the need for temporary accommodation during construction.

Community Space and Arts Initiatives

The Parish Clerk highlighted the importance of providing space for the community, with Richard Wallond advocating for a delay in decision-making until more information on funding is available. James Gregory supported the idea of a follow-up meeting on the 13/1/26 to assess the usefulness of recent discussions. The group also discussed the need for community arts initiatives that reflect local distinctiveness.

Action Items:

- * James Gregory will continue conversations regarding applying for investment for costs around the main project.
- * James Gregory will prepare a smaller request for lottery funding to increase the chances of approval.
- * Parish Clerk - Hanslope PC will review the previous art strategy document and provide feedback.
- * James Gregory will create a business case to demonstrate the need for a larger pavilion and clubhouse for the football club.
- * James Gregory will send an invite for the meeting with Chris Curtis, the MP, scheduled for January 9th, to Richard Wallond.

Key Questions:

- * What are the specific reasons for the lottery funding rejection?
- * How can the community better demonstrate the need for funding?
- * Is there a possibility of advising on funding for the village hall, from any rejected applications?