

**New Homes Bonus 2020 Allocation**

Indicative allocation is £16,000.

A number of project suggestions were put forward for the money, including supporting residents and businesses in the short-term response to the COVID crisis. Chichester District Council have advised us that they do not regard this as a suitable use of the funds and any application for this purpose would be ineligible.

This leaves two proposed projects for consideration:

**1) Funding of a community support officer for 12 months**

To use the funding to support the appointment of a community support officer for an initial 12 month contract. The purpose of the role would be to build the community volunteer and community forum network identified in the Parish Council Business Plan which is essential to developing community resilience, sharing resources and building partnerships.

The role would also support residents in accessing essential services and support locally, particularly as more and more services are being driven on-line and many residents do not have either access to on-line services or the skills needed to navigate them.

Early indicators show that there are rising levels of financial distress amongst local residents and that need for help in accessing support services is rising: The number of residents claiming out of work benefits has almost tripled since February 2020 from 64 to 175. As furlough schemes ends this is anticipated to rise further. Universal credit claims are now subject to mandatory job searching activity, so claimants have to prove that they have undertaken 30 hours of active job searching per week to qualify for the benefit

Similarly, the number of foodbank vouchers issued to local residents is rising compared to the same period last year: with 9 vouchers issued (fed 25 people) for March-June 2019 Vs 22 vouchers (59 people fed) for the same period in 2020.

The NHB funding would allow the council to create a part-time post for an initial period of 12 months, delivering support and advice and building community resilience and support networks. The post would be for 21 hours per week (three days) and would be based both at Bracklesham Barn and in the community (for example for drop-in sessions at the Library, etc.) on NJC salary scales at SCP 24 (£22,401 pro rata). Estimated costs for employing the roles for the council (including on costs is £16,500) for 12 months. The aim would be to secure additional funding from other sources (including potential government initiatives to support those who have lost their jobs during the COVID crisis) to extend the post beyond the initial 12 months.

**2) Refurbishment of the Pavillion at Downview**

Some work has been undertaken at Downview Pavillion to improve conditions for the football club, but in order to make the building suitable for the long term and to increase its value to the community, there is a need for further significant improvements. These include:

- Removing and making good the decommissioned shower stalls (the pipework is disconnected, but the cubicles currently remain in place and are wasted space),
- Dry lining and plastering the old store room so that it is a suitable space for team briefings and watching training videos in wet weather.
- Installing a new heating system and low energy lighting and improving the area in front of the pavilion.
- Installing a hardstanding and equipment shed for the better storage of the goalposts and equipment.

Completion of the refurbishment will not only make the pavilion more fit for purpose for the football club, but will also allow the option that in future it can be used as an additional venue for holiday activity clubs, etc and would benefit many children and their families and improve a council asset.