



WEST OXFORDSHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL

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Name and date of Committee	WESTHIVE PLEDGE REVIEW GROUP WEDNESDAY 30th OCTOBER 2024 AT 1:30PM
Subject	WESTHIVE CROWDFUND ROUND 3 - AUTUMN 2024 PLEDGE DETERMINATIONS INCORPORATING COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE FUND (UK SHARED PROSPERITY FUND)
Wards affected	ALL
Accountable member	Grants: Cllr Alaric Smith – Executive Member for Finance. Email: alaric.smith@westoxon.gov.uk Community Infrastructure Fund: Cllr Duncan Enright – Deputy Leader of the Council and Executive Member for Economic Development. Email: duncan.enright@westoxon.gov.uk
Accountable officer	From 1 st November 2024: Westhive and Community Infrastructure Fund: Phil Martin – Director of Place. Email: phil.martin@westoxon.gov.uk
Report author	Janine Sparrowhawk – Community Funding Officer Email: janine.sparrowhawk@publicagroup.uk From 1 st November 2024: janine.sparrowhawk@westoxon.gov.uk
Summary/Purpose	To consider submissions to the third round of Westhive Crowdfund, and to determine which projects the Council may pledge towards.
Annexes	Annex A – Westhive Fund Criteria
Recommendation(s)	That the Westhive Pledge Review group resolves to: I. Recommend to the Chief Executive that pledges be made as set out in 2.11.
Corporate priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Putting Residents First• A Good Quality of Life for All• Creating a Better Environment for People and Wildlife• Responding to the Climate and Ecological Emergency• Working Together for West Oxfordshire

Key Decision	NO
Exempt	NO
Consultees/ Consultation	<p>Westhive: Decision to be made by the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader and Executive Members for Stronger Healthy Communities, Environment, Climate Action and Nature Recovery, Finance and Leisure and Major Projects.</p> <p>Community Infrastructure Fund (UK Shared Prosperity Fund): Decision to be made in consultation with the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Economic Development.</p> <p>Relevant Executive Members were consulted on the report.</p> <p>In addition a number of Executive Members were involved in a review of the project funding bids and potential pledges with officers ahead of the report being prepared.</p>

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 In March 2023, the Executive Committee agreed to commission Spacehive Ltd to create a Westhive 'movement' on its civic crowdfunding platform. This movement enables local people to promote ideas for civic projects, to raise money from local supporters, including the Council. The Round 3 project creators pitch deadline was 29th September 2024. Projects live on the Westhive platform have completed verification by Spacehive and are currently campaigning for pledges from the public and businesses.
- 1.2 Please visit <https://www.spacehive.com/movement/westhive/> to view the live campaigns.
- 1.3 The Council is promoting two funding sources on the platform. The Council's main Westhive Fund has an available budget of £113,426 until 31st March 2025. The UK Government, Community Infrastructure Fund (UKSPF) has a remaining total budget of £175,559 which concludes on 31st March 2025. Projects can 'pitch' for support to either fund or both. The Council's main Westhive fund can contribute up to 40% of the total project cost or up to £10,000, whichever is less, to projects of a capital and revenue nature. The Council may consider applying a premium to projects which are seeking to directly address climate change, the ecological emergency or providing direct support to vulnerable groups, up to a total of 50%. The UKSPF can contribute towards capital costs of up to 90% of the total project cost or up to £30,000, whichever is less.
- 1.4 When arriving at the recommendations officers have sought to prioritise projects based on the following factors:
- Relevance to Council aims.
 - Benefit of the project.
 - Number of pledges.
 - Relation to other projects.
 - Value for money/potential impact.
- 1.5 The officers recommendations are summarised in 2.11.

2. PROJECTS FOR CONSIDERATION

- 2.1 The following projects have pitched for support on Westhive. Each pitch on the website starts with a slightly longer summary of the project, before then addressing appraisal questions. The up-to-date number of supporters, and funding raised, will be shared at the meeting, to inform the Council's pledge decision if this has changed from 21st October 2024. Updated project supporter numbers and funding information was shared at the meeting and the revised Council pledges agreed as detailed in the report.
- 2.2 **Charlbury Youth Ambassador**
- 2.2.1 The Thomas Gifford Trust has launched a £18,540 campaign to fund a project to engage a dedicated Youth Ambassador who will support, motivate and engage with young people in Charlbury and the surrounding areas. They will provide a comprehensive programme of activities addressing the needs of the youth, particularly for young people who feel marginalised and underprivileged. The aim is to work with young people to improve mental health, social engagement and future career prospects. The project will be financed for 12

months and included in the project costs are staff costs, hall hire for the youth club and refreshments and supplies.

2.2.2 There are currently 10 community backed pledges totalling £350 and no in kind contributions.

2.2.3 The project has pitched to the Westhive Fund.

2.2.4 Recommendation: Westhive Fund – Support = £5,562.

2.3 Tuition for marginalised young people

2.3.1 Aspire Oxfordshire launched a £15,599 campaign to fund a project to support 18 -24-year olds in West Oxfordshire with literacy and numeracy tuition. Many of Aspire's young clients are disengaged from education at a young age. Aspire will deliver 36 1:1 sessions for 4 young people; 48 group sessions for 6 young people; and examinations for 24 young people.

Tuition will help the young people reach GCSE level in literacy and numeracy, leading to greater independence and improved resilience. With these new skills, clients are more likely to get into apprenticeship schemes, find work and sustain tenancies. The project will be based at the Witney Hub and add to the Hub's existing support programmes.

2.3.2 The project launched within the last week. There is currently 1 community backed pledge of £4,000 from Oxford Poverty Action Trust and no in kind contributions.

2.3.3 The project has pitched to the Westhive Fund.

2.3.4 Recommendation: Westhive Fund – Support = £6,239.

2.4 Stonesfield Scout Woodland Community Hub

2.4.1 1st Stonesfield Scouts launched a £114,440 campaign to fund a project to build a new scout hut, replacing a demolished old Nissan hut. The building will provide a secure base for all the activities of the Scout group and provide a valuable resource for the wider community and local groups in its role as an accessible outdoor education and environmental wellbeing centre. The local school and pre-school are supporting the project and will utilise the centre for forest school. The space will provide a fully accessible building for the 100 young people covering the beavers, cubs and scouts groups. The project has commenced with the demolition of the old building and the formation of new building slab and associated drainage and septic tank. The group successfully obtained a Council Community Facilities Grant in 2021/22 of £36,750 towards the same project. The grant is still being drawn down by the group, meaning they are unable to pitch to the Westhive Fund. They are eligible to pitch to the Community Infrastructure Fund.

2.4.2 There are currently 20 community backed pledges totalling £55,753 and no in kind contributions.

2.4.3 The project has pitched to the Community Infrastructure Fund (UKSPF intervention E11 - Funding for investment in capacity building and infrastructure support for local civil society and community groups).

2.4.4 Recommendation: Community Infrastructure Fund – Support = £30,000.

2.5 Grow the game by creating new facilities

2.5.1 Witney Vikings Youth Football Club launched a £6,483 campaign to fund a project to develop existing facilities to increase capacity for football training and games. This will enable the 50-year-old grassroots club to continue recruiting players and developing teams for

young girls and boys. Additionally, the club will develop their 5 community programmes. The club would also like to offer walking football and more sessions for children with learning and physical disabilities. The club has 700 players, 40 teams and 100 volunteers. There are currently 250 children on the clubs waiting list. The project will enable the club to purchase an on-site 20 foot storage container and folding goals which will be located at Wood Green School, Witney which the club uses for training and games.

- 2.5.2 The Club have landowner permission for the project but must satisfy officers that they have obtained Planning permission advice for the project to proceed.
- 2.5.3 There are currently 85 community backed pledges totalling £1,172 and no in kind contributions.
- 2.5.4 The project has pitched to the Community Infrastructure Fund (UKSPF intervention E10 – Funding for local sports facilities, tournaments, teams and leagues; to bring people together) and the Westhive Fund.
- 2.5.5 Recommendation: Westhive Fund – No award due to crowd funding already received. Community Infrastructure Fund – Support - As of 30th October 2024, the amount required to meet the project cost is £5,311. Therefore, the recommended amount is to support, £5,311. The recommendation is to not over fund the project cost and to enable the project to reach the campaign target.

2.6 Growing at Bridewell Gardens

- 2.6.1 Bridewell Gardens launched a £59,495 campaign to fund a project to complete the first phase of a project to transform their workspaces that are in desperate need of refurbishment. Bridewell Gardens is based at Wilcote, North Leigh and has 30 years of experience using gardening and nature to support people recovering from serious mental ill health in West Oxfordshire. A new insulated timber garden office will replace an old garage, providing a warm, safe and welcoming space for meetings with key workers and space for confidential calls and conversations. People accessing the recovery service and health professionals will be able to use the facility to meet with staff for assessments, inductions and regular support meetings. The Recovery and Employment Coach will be able to work with people planning the next steps beyond Bridewell including volunteering, jobs and further studies.
- 2.6.2 There are currently 51 community backed pledges totalling £2,310 and no in kind contributions.
- 2.6.3 Planning permission is being sought for the project and any Council pledge will be subject to the necessary permissions being in place for the project to proceed.
- 2.6.4 The project has pitched to the Community Infrastructure Fund (UKSPF intervention E11 - Funding for investment in capacity building and infrastructure support for local civil society and community groups) and the Westhive Fund.
- 2.6.5 Recommendation: Westhive Fund – Support = £10,000.
Community Infrastructure Fund – Support = £30,000.

2.7 Eynsham Allotments “Call of Nature”

- 2.7.1 Eynsham Allotments Association launched a £27,001 campaign to fund a project to improve site facilities. Improvements will include installing a fully accessible composting toilet for its 200+ allotmenters. Currently there are no toilet facilities on site. The association also

plans to regenerate the woodland area, planting more species of trees and shrubs including a communal orchard. The project will encourage more biodiversity with the installation of bird boxes, bee boxes, bug hotels and insect habitats. Diseased ash trees that are close to paths will be removed for safety reasons. The woodland path will be made accessible for all, and a clearing will be created as a “classroom”. This will be used by all age groups from within the wider village community for outdoor events and learning in nature. Picnic tables and benches will also be provided. The woodland regeneration will keep the land healthy for successive generations of nature lovers and growers.

2.7.2 There are currently 42 community backed pledges totalling £3,095 and no in kind contributions.

2.7.3 The project has pitched to the Community Infrastructure Fund (UKSPF intervention E11 - Funding for investment in capacity building and infrastructure support for local civil society and community groups) and the Westhive Fund.

Recommendation: Westhive Fund – Support - As of 30th October 2024, the amount required to meet the project cost is £1,136. Therefore, the recommended amount is to support, £1,136.

Community Infrastructure Fund – Support = £22,770.

The recommendation is to not over fund the project cost and to enable the project to reach the campaign target.

2.8 Witney Mills Cricket Nets & Fence

2.8.1 Witney Mills Cricket Club launched a £85,844 campaign to fund a project to replace and upgrade the existing cricket net facility and perimeter fencing. The club based at Newland, Witney currently has 160 junior and 70 senior members. The senior teams have progressed into the Cherwell league. The new 2 lane fully enclosed net facility will allow all members to train whilst matches are being played. Following a ball strike risk assessment the existing perimeter fencing adjoining the B4022 at Newland has been identified as requiring an increase in height. This is to prevent the possibility of damage to property, vehicles and pedestrians from cricket balls during games.

2.8.2 There are currently 62 community backed pledges totalling £17,321 and £4,603 in kind contributions.

2.8.3 Planning permission is being sought for the project and any Council pledge will be subject to the necessary permissions being in place for the project to proceed.

2.8.4 The project has pitched to the Community Infrastructure Fund (UKSPF intervention E10 - Funding for local sports facilities, tournaments, teams and leagues; to bring people together) and the Westhive Fund.

2.8.5 Recommendation: Westhive Fund – Support £10,000.

Community Infrastructure Fund – Support £30,000.

2.9 Community-led meadow creation in West Oxfordshire

2.9.1 Long Mead Foundation and Nature Recovery Network launched a £35,241 campaign to fund a project to purchase a manure spreader, flail mower collector and greenhouse. These items will enable wildflower seed to be distributed across meadows, the collection of organic material during the autumn cutting of new meadows and the propagation of plants to be used in the restoration of meadow land. The project will be creating meadows around the

ancient meadows to join up the fragments and support their survival in and around Eynsham. The project base is on Long Mead Wildlife Site, Swinford. The project will enable community planting of hand propagated plants to help restore 70 acres of meadow leased by the community. These 70 acres will add to the over 200ha of ancient and restored meadow connected to date. The flail mower will enable the restoration of at least 30 acres of community meadow by cutting hay from neighbouring ancient meadow. The project creator has advised that the equipment will be shared with other local organisations and landowners. Plant propagation skills will be taught to vulnerable adults, people with mental and physical health challenges, students etc. Teaching sessions will also be run twice weekly throughout the year for the whole community.

2.9.2 There are currently 26 community backed pledges totalling £2,628 and £2,300 in kind contributions.

2.9.3 The project has pitched to the Community Infrastructure Fund (UKSPF intervention E3 - Funding for the creation of and improvements to local green spaces, community gardens, watercourses and embankments, along with incorporating natural features into wider public spaces) and the Westhive Fund.

Recommendation: Westhive Fund – Support - As of 30th October 2024, the amount required to meet the project cost is £313. Therefore, the recommended amount is to support, £313.

Community Infrastructure Fund – Support = £30,000.

The recommendation is to not over fund the project cost and to enable the project to reach the campaign target.

2.10 Help children be creative

2.10.1 Cotswold Arts Through Schools launched a £79,150 campaign to fund a partnership project working with local arts organisations working with schools within West Oxfordshire and the surrounding area. They wish to increase the number of schools and range of activities that are provided. The project creator has confirmed that this would enable the group to expand the original scheme and work with a further 11 West Oxfordshire schools. The project is predominantly in primary schools though there is interaction with secondary schools. In the schools that they already work with they want to add more musical instruments for older children. In new schools they will be providing a full range of workshops, materials and musical instruments. Drama and dance workshops will also be provided. Transport will be provided for visits to exhibitions and concerts. Further teacher training and inspirational workshops will be provided. As part of the project, a library of children's artworks (primary school to A level artists) for use in local businesses and old people homes will be developed. Local companies will be able to rent the artworks with proceeds going to art in schools as well as supporting the charity.

2.10.2 The project launched within the last week and there are currently 4 community backed pledges totalling £22,230 and £8,000 in kind contributions.

2.10.3 The project creator, Cotswold Arts Through Schools successfully received £20,000 Council pledge funding in Round I for a £50,535 project. £10,000 was pledged under the UKSPF funding and £10,000 was pledged under the Westhive Fund. The project creator has confirmed that the Round I project enabled the organisation to work with 12 West Oxfordshire Schools.

2.10.4 The project has pitched to the Community Infrastructure Fund (UKSPF intervention E6 - Funding for support for local arts, cultural, heritage and creative activities) and the Westhive Fund.

2.10.5 Recommendation: Westhive Fund – Support £10,000.
Community Infrastructure Fund – Support £27,478.

2.11 Summary of recommendations:

Project	Council Main Westhive Fund	UKSPF	Number of pledges	Value of pledges to date
Charlbury Youth Ambassador <i>Total Officer Score</i>	£5,562 27/50	N/A	10	£0 (in kind) £350 (cash)
Tuition for marginalised young people <i>Total Officer Score</i>	£6,239 35/50	N/A	1	£0 (in kind) £4,000 (cash)
Stonesfield Scout Woodland Community Hub <i>Total Officer Score</i>	N/A 42/50	£30,000	20	£0 (in kind) £55,753 (cash)
Grow the game from creating new facilities <i>Total Officer Score</i>	£0 40/50	£5,311 40/50	85	£0 (in kind) £1,172 (cash)
Growing at Bridewell Gardens <i>Total Officer Score</i>	£10,000 30/50	£30,000 30/50	51	£0 (in kind) £2,310 (cash)
Eynsham Allotments “Call of Nature” <i>Total Officer Score</i>	£1,136 45/50	£22,770 45/50	42	£0 (in kind) £3,095 (cash)
Witney Mills Cricket Nets & Fence <i>Total Officer Score</i>	£10,000 40/50	£30,000 40/50	62	£4,603 (in kind) £17,321 (cash)
Community-led meadow creation in West Oxfordshire <i>Total Officer Score</i>	£313 45/50	£30,000 45/50	26	£2,300 (in kind) £2,628 (cash)
Help children be creative <i>Total Officer Score</i>	£10,000	£27,478	4	£8,000 (in kind) £22,230 (cash)

	<i>30/50</i>	<i>30/50</i>	
Total	£43,250	£175,559	
Remaining budget	£70,176	£0	

3. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 3.1 The Chief Executive could decide not to fund at the levels recommended above and instead refer the matter for further consultation with the Executive. This would necessitate a further review group meeting and delay determinations.

4 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 At the time that the Council determines a pledge a project is actively fundraising. The project may still need to raise further funds to reach its campaign target after the Council has made a pledge.
- 4.2 The applications above are within the agreed remaining budget parameters for both the Council's main Westhive Fund budget 2024/25 of £113,426 and the Community Infrastructure Fund (UK Shared Prosperity Fund) budget 2024/25 of £175,559. The remaining budgets are detailed in 2.11.
- 4.3 Where a project has pitched to both funds and will probably reach the crowdfunding target from a Council pledge, officers have allocated funding firstly from the UKSPF budget, as the funding concludes on 31st March 2025.
- 4.4 The recommended pledge for each project from the Council is calculated on the day of the pledge meeting to enable the project creator to meet their crowdfunding target and not overfund the project cost where possible.

5 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 All applications have been verified by Spacehive, to ensure that they meet criteria and are appropriate to launch on a civic crowdfunding platform. Officers and the Members panel have reviewed the projects and supporting material, and this is reflected in the recommendations above.

6 RISK ASSESSMENT

- 6.1 This verification process ensures that pitches will only be made by eligible applicants. While this process prevents pledges being given to support ineligible activities, it cannot mitigate wholly against dissatisfaction where projects are unsuccessful in reaching their targets.
- 6.2 While the Council's grant fund is within the Council's control, projects will also need to attract sufficient funding to reach their campaign targets from other supporters by their campaign deadlines. While this is a feature of crowdfunding, it may impact on take-up - projects the Council determines to support today potentially not meeting their targets and thus will not drawing down grants.
- 6.3 Where pledges are drawn down, but change of circumstances prevent activity taking place, Spacehive have procedures in place to seek the return of pledges. The Council maintains its

discretion not to recover the grant where alternative or more limited activity could still take place.

7 EQUALITIES IMPACT

- 7.1** The scheme has been designed to be open to geographical communities and communities of interest. The range of projects that have come forward to this third round is to a degree testament to this, as projects cover a range of very different activities, from different communities of geography and interest across the district.

8 CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCIES IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1** All projects have been asked to consider climate change, and any activity they could undertake to help mitigate its impacts. Positive actions to address climate change will be encouraged.

9 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 9.1** None

(END)