



WEST OXFORDSHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL

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Name and date of Committee	WESTHIVE PLEDGE REVIEW GROUP MONDAY 15TH JANUARY 2024 AT 12:30PM
Subject	WESTHIVE CROWDFUND ROUND 1 AUTUMN 2023 PLEDGE DETERMINATIONS INCORPORATING COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE FUND (UK SHARED PROSPERITY FUND)
Wards affected	All
Accountable member	Grants : Cllr Joy Aitman, Executive Member for Stronger Healthy Communities. Email: joy.aitman@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	Westhive: Andy Barge, Assistant Director – Communities. Email: andy.barge@publicagroup.uk Community Infrastructure Fund: Claire Locke – Assistant Director, Property and Regeneration. Email: claire.locke@publicagroup.uk
Report author	Janine Sparrowhawk – Community Funding Officer Email: janine.sparrowhawk@publicagroup.uk
Summary/Purpose	To consider submissions to the first round of Westhive Crowdfund, and to determine which projects the Council may pledge towards.
Annexes	Annex A – Westhive Fund Criteria Applications and Supporting documentation, hyperlinked in the text below.
Recommendation(s)	That the Westhive Pledge Review group resolves to: I. Recommend to the Chief Executive that pledges be made as set out in 2.7.
Corporate priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Putting Residents First

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Good Quality of Life for All • 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, Planning and Sustainable Development, Environment, and Climate Change.</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. Responses were received from the Leader and the Executive Members for Planning & Sustainable Development, Environment, Climate Change and Stronger Healthy Communities. These responses were happy with the recommendations in 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. Round 1 closed initially on 29th November 2023 and then was extended to January 2024. Projects have completed verification and are currently campaigning for pledges from the public.
- 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 a total available budget of £120,000. The UK Shared Prosperity fund (UKSPF) has a total budget of £226,000 over two years (£40,000 in 2023/24). Projects can 'pitch' for support to either fund or both. The Council's main Westhive fund can contribute up to 40% or £10,000 of the total cost. The UKSPF can contribute up to 50% or £20,000.
- 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 and Executive Members recommendations are summarised in 2.7.

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 was shared at the meeting to inform the Council's pledge decision if this changed.
- 2.2 **West Oxfordshire Playdays 2024**
 - 2.2.1 Oxfordshire Play Association (OPA) has launched a £20,653 campaign to fund a project to deliver four free Community Playday events in 2024 in West Oxfordshire. The events are planned to take place in Witney, Carterton / RAF Brize Norton, Chipping Norton and Eynsham. Each year OPA organises a series of Play and Activity days at multiple venues across Oxfordshire in line with the ethos of National Playday, the celebration of the Childs Right to Play. Entrance and activities at each event are free to ensure an inclusion for all. £1,000 of the project costs are land hire fees contributed in kind by the local Town Councils. There are currently no community backed pledges.
 - 2.2.2 The project has pitched to Westhive Fund.
 - 2.2.3 Recommendation: Westhive Fund - Support, £3,304

2.3 Cycles of Good

- 2.3.1** Windrush Bike Project has launched a £17,318 campaign to fund a project to enable vulnerable people to learn skills and build confidence through recycling donated bikes. The bikes are then given to disadvantaged young people, refugees and asylum seekers who need them. The inclusive bike library removes the financial and physical barriers to children owning and riding cycles. A pool of shared bikes at the hotel in Witney will enable asylum seekers access to education, shops and services. Young people will have a safe and inclusive space to learn bike mechanics and keep their cycles roadworthy. Adults will gain confidence to make short journeys by cycle with the Rusty Riders programme. There are currently 17 community backed pledges totalling £12,965 and £1,800 in kind contributions.
- 2.3.2** The project has pitched to Westhive Fund.
- 2.3.3** Recommendation: Westhive Fund - Support up to £6,927.20 depending on crowd funding target as of 17th January 2024. The recommendation is to not over fund the project cost. As of 17th January 2024, the amount required to meet the project cost is £4,353. Therefore the recommended amount is to support, £4,353.

2.4 Cotswold Arts Through Schools

- 2.4.1** Cotswold Arts Through Schools has launched a £50,535 campaign to fund a project to provide art, music, drama, dance, and oracy opportunities in all local primary schools. Restocking art cupboards and music rooms, teacher training, visiting artists and musicians to inspire and excite children. Their aim is to give local children opportunities through arts and music, to be inspired and achieve their creative potential. They aim to use local artists, musicians and drama specialists to help create employment opportunities in the arts sector. There are currently 39 community backed pledges totalling £26,495 and £5,000 in kind contributions.
- 2.4.2** The project has pitched to the Community Infrastructure Fund (REPF intervention E11) and the Westhive Fund.
- 2.4.3** Recommendation: Westhive Fund Support, £10,000 / Community Infrastructure Fund – Support, £10,000 and that the funding is used to support the project within West Oxfordshire.

2.5 Saving Eden Café for Community Use

- 2.5.1** The Cherwell Collective, CIC has launched a £72,489 campaign to support the transition of the ownership of Eden Café for community use and become a community asset. The project will build on the continued success of the Eden Café with the addition of community space operating in the afternoon providing various activities, offering a space for community organisations to meet and the creation of a family space. The project will also support grassroots climate resilience building in Witney. There are many elements to this project which can be read further by following the link to the pdf. Further details of the project have been requested to enable a fully informed decision on the campaign due to the high value of the project. There are currently 13 community backed pledges totalling £1,560.

- 2.5.2 The project has pitched to the Community Infrastructure Fund and the Westhive Fund.
- 2.5.3 Recommendation: To delay the pledging decision and bring the project to a future meeting for consideration.

2.6 Enriching our community through theatre

- 2.6.1 Branching out Drama Society (BODS) has launched a £7,002 campaign to fund a project that will purchase theatrical equipment using better stage equipment, sets, costumes and technical resources. This will enrich their community theatre offering, for the benefits of the community they serve and those that participate in their productions and workshops. BODS takes performances into the community. Their society is entirely volunteer run. The project has just launched and currently has no community backed pledges.
- 2.6.2 The project has pitched to the Community Infrastructure Fund (REPF intervention E6).
- 2.6.3 Recommendation: Community Infrastructure Fund – Support, £1,759.

2.7 Summary of recommendations:

	Council Main Westhive fund	UKSPF	Number of pledges	Value of pledges to date
West Oxfordshire Playdays 2024	£3,304	£ n/a	4 in kind	£1,000 (in kind)
Cycles of Good	£4,353	£ n/a	17	£1,800 (in kind) £12,965 (cash)
Cotswold Arts Through Schools	£10,000	£10,000	39	£5,000 (in kind) £26,495 (cash)
Saving Eden Café for Community Use	£ deferred	£ deferred	13	£1,560 (cash)
Enriching our community through theatre	£ n/a	£1,759	0	0
Total	£17,657	£11,759		

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 any 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 budget parameters for both the Council's main Westhive fund budget 2023/24 of £120,000 and the Community Infrastructure Fund (UK Shared Prosperity Fund) budget 2023/24 of £40,000.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 All applications have been verified by Spacehive, to ensure that they 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 may not meet their targets and thus will not draw 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 first 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