



ST AGNES PARISH COUNCIL

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Full Council meeting: 13th April 2026

Agenda item 12: St. Agnes Parishwide Defibrillator Network annual support fund request

Context

To consider whether the request from the St. Agnes Parishwide Defibrillator Network CIC for an annual contribution of £1,500 can be determined under the Council's Grants Policy and, if not, what alternative approach Members may wish to take.

Assessment

As drafted, the request does not sit within the Council's Grants Policy, and the policy cannot properly be applied to it. The policy makes clear that grants are for a specific purpose, should be one-off, should not result in recurring expenditure for the Council, and that applications must relate to a specific item of capital expenditure or project, rather than to regular maintenance or other revenue items. The policy also states that the Council will not commit to ongoing grant funding. On that basis, a request for recurring annual support towards insurance, filing fees, accountancy, website costs and other variable overheads falls outside the scope of the policy.

That said, the proposal is plainly aligned with the Council's broader community-benefit objectives. The Grants Policy recognises support for community wellbeing, direct parish benefit, provision of services and enhancement of quality of life as legitimate public purposes. Support for community health and public safety is therefore a positive matter in principle, even though this request is not policy compliant as a grant application.

Comparison with the Parish Youth Project

The Council does have an example of making provision outside the Grants Policy, namely the Parish Youth Project. However, that should be treated as a separate commissioned service arrangement, not as an extension of the Grants Policy. The Youth Strategy states that the Council will provide an annual budget to support child and youth services, that the Parish Youth Project is a Council-commissioned service delivered in partnership with Young People Cornwall, and that the annual Council budget should include dedicated PYP funding separate from the general grant funding budget. The Youth Strategy further records that the Parish Council commissions the PYP and provides funding, governance oversight and financial accountability. The current £5,000 youth allocation for 2026/27 is therefore distinguishable from an ordinary grant award because it is strategy-led, separately budgeted and tied to an established commissioned service.

Historic context

By contrast, the Council expressly divested itself of the defibrillators because of the ongoing financial pressure of maintaining and replacing them, and because the CIC is in a better position to pursue funding streams not open to the Council:

4th November 2024, minute reference 183/24: St Agnes Parish Community Access Defibrillator Network

Received a report and verbal update from Cllr. Kimberley, who thanked the Council for showcasing what can be achieved. Cllrs. Rodda, Watson and Kimberley have agreed to be directors of a new Community Interest Company (CIC) in their personal capacity; and a further 3 directors with business acumen have been identified. RESOLVED to transfer all Council

owned defibrillators and associated assets to the new CIC once established and grant to the CIC £1,580, being the defibrillator ringfenced funds, including donations from public fundraising. Cllrs Ripper/Blight. Unanimous.

That makes the defibrillator request materially different from the Parish Youth Project position. Even so, Members may still consider whether a modest one-off contribution to support community health infrastructure is justified as a separate discretionary decision, rather than as a grant under the policy.

Financial implications

A contribution of £1,500 represents 0.15% of the Council's 2026/27 annual expenditure budget of £993,071. Due to staffing underspends in 2025/26, arising from recruitment lag, the Council is able to meet a one-off unbudgeted payment to the CIC outside of the £20,000 grants budget. Funded in this way, from year end underspends rather than any precept requirement, the payment would not affect the 2026/27 Precept or overall budget and would not materially impact reserves. In the context of the Council's total annual expenditure, this is a very small sum.

Alternatively, the Council could defer a decision until its June meeting, when it will consider the first of four grant funding tranches and have £5,000 available for allocation from the 2026/27 annual grants budget.

Options for Members

If Members wish to provide support now, the cleanest route would be to treat the matter as a one-off discretionary contribution outside the Grants Policy, with the resolution making clear that it is separate from the grants scheme and does not create any ongoing commitment. That would allow support to be given without reducing the ordinary grants budget and without distorting the terms of the Grants Policy.

Members could also make clear that any future recurring annual support would only be considered following completion of the Council's wider 3–5 year business plan and, if considered appropriate, the development of a public health or community safety strategy to support any longer-term financial commitment. This would provide a clear strategic basis before entering into any recurring funding arrangement and would place such support on a comparable footing to the Parish Youth Project funding example.

If Members prefer to complete that strategic work first and require the CIC to proceed through the Grants Policy this year, the CIC would need to submit an application in the usual way, compliant with the Council's Grant Policy criteria, for consideration at the next ordinary funding round in June. The policy provides for quarterly consideration in June, September, December and March. Any application would need to relate to a specific one-off item or clearly defined project; it could not remain open-ended in the way the current request is framed.

Suggested conclusion / recommendation

Members note that the request for recurring annual support of £1,500 cannot properly be determined under the Council's Grants Policy as drafted, because it seeks ongoing support for general overhead and revenue costs. However, Members also note that the Council has separately funded the Parish Youth Project outside the Grants Policy where this has been supported by an adopted strategy and a commissioned service arrangement.

Accordingly, Members may, if minded, award the CIC a one-off payment of £1,500 outside the Grants Policy, separate from the Council's annual grants budget, on the basis that the sum is affordable within the overall budget and would not materially affect the Precept, Budget or reserve position. Any future request should be considered only after completion of the Council's business planning work and, if appropriate, the development of a public health strategy. Alternatively, if Members prefer the matter to be considered under the Grants Policy, the CIC should be invited to submit a compliant application for a specific one-off item or project for determination at the next ordinary grants meeting.