

WEST SWINDON PARISH COUNCIL

Full Council

Defibrillators

1 Background:

- 1.1** Councillor Mary Martin has brought forward the question of acquiring an Automated External Defibrillators (AED's) within the Parish. This was previously debated by the Parish Council in 2017.
- 1.2** An AED is a device which enables the general public to attempt to restart a heart after a cardiac arrest. They are designed to be simple to operate; the device has a computer programme which reads the heart rhythm and only discharges (automatically) if it is correct to use a shock in that set of circumstances. They are generally sited in community settings. Defibrillators can be registered on a national network – The Circuit.

2. Considerations

- 2.1** At present there is no statutory legal requirement under law to provide a defibrillator.
- 2.2** Purchase of an AED should be considered in the context of the risk of a member of staff or member of the public sustaining a cardiac arrest at any given place balanced against the ease and speed of access to NHS emergency services, the cost of purchase, installation, and maintenance of AEDs, and of initial and ongoing training of staff to use the devices.
- 2.3** There are schemes available such as that from the British Heart Foundation which part funds defibrillators (if it meets the criteria) where they are in a cabinet and accessible to the public.
- 2.4** Risk assessment should be used as the basis on which to determine the need for AED's within any site. This assessment should include the following factors:
- The frequency of cardiac arrest at the site; The Resuscitation Council guidelines indicate that if the frequency is 1 arrest every 2 years then evidence supports the use of AEDs.
 - The likely time between call out and arrival of a paramedic unit. If this is greater than 5 minutes then AED's *may* be a relevant consideration. Information specifically related to call out times in West Swindon would need to be sought.
 - The time between collapse of a victim and the availability of the on-site AED. If this is going to be greater than the time for a paramedic to arrive, it is of little benefit installing an AED, or it might mean locating multiple AEDs across the Parish.
 - The overall risk of the various sites e.g gyms and leisure centres have a higher risk of experiencing a cardiac arrest
 - The population being served; West Swindon has a diverse population but is well connected to emergency health services in Swindon.
- 2.5** Other factors for the Parish to consider in deciding on the use of AEDs include
- Training. There will be a commitment to training both initially and ongoing. Any training must comply with the guidelines of the Resuscitation Council UK.

- Cost of AEDs. This will include the initial cost (about £1000 per unit) and the ongoing maintenance (calibration, servicing, batteries etc).
- Routine upkeep of the AEDs. They must be kept available, fully charged and with appropriately trained people available to administer treatment with them at all times. There are online training tools.
- Selection of individuals trained in the use of AEDs and their distribution in the workplace
- Monitoring of the system

Financial and Legal Considerations:

- 2.6** The machine will be covered by a warranty of between five to eight years, depending on the model, although some manufacturers offer extension up to ten years. The pads usually have a shelf life of between two years and five years, and the batteries of between four and seven years.
- 2.7** Public liability insurance cover would need to be amended.
- 2.8** The Parish Council does not have a specified budget for this however there is £1700 allocated to Community and Events which could be used for this purpose.
- 2.9** Legal implications. Legal action may ensue following the use of AEDs and compensation sought. A person who attempts resuscitation will only be liable for damages if negligent intervention directly causes injury which would not otherwise have occurred or if it exacerbates an injury. If circumstances arise whereby without resuscitation the casualty would almost certainly die, the risk of incurring such liability is extremely small. If, however, a resuscitation procedure is carried out negligently and a consequential injury can be proved to have arisen from that negligent procedure, a rescuer may be held liable for substantial damages if the standard of care he or she employed fell below that which could be expected in the given circumstances. This applies whether he or she is a health professional, a volunteer first-aider or simply an unskilled member of the public.

For more information,

The Resuscitation Council UK website at www.resus.org.uk/defibrillators/

3 Recommendations

- 3.1** Councillors to consider whether to instruct the Parish Manager to progress further.

Paula Harrison
West Swindon Parish Manager