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**Report To:** Planning, Leisure & Environment Committee      **Date:** 06 November 2023

**Contact Officer:** Paula Harrison

**Subject:** Clean and Green Update

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## **1. Clean & Green Fund**

- 1.1 Residents in West Swindon have been actively litter picking and looking after green spaces for many years. In April 2018, the Parish Council introduced a Volunteer Reward scheme to show acknowledgement and appreciation of the volunteer's time. The fund is referred to as the Clean and Green fund.
- 1.2 The fund allocates funds to a neighbourhood pot or a group. An individual person contributes £5 per hour to the fund, and a group contributes £30 per session. The fund is managed by the Parish Office and no payments are made direct to groups. Any group is capped at £2,000 accrual and expenditure in any two year period.
- Groups can spend the pot through requests made to the Parish office for
- 1.3 materials, tools or planting that supports a clean and green environment.
- 1.4 Since its inception the fund has not appeared to be the reason behind people's willingness to step forward to volunteer, however, it has been a useful mechanism to assist with the recording of volunteer hours across the Parish.
- 1.5 Organised groups such as Shaw FAB, Peatmoor Woodland, Westlea Park, Greendown Copse and Blagrove Community allotment are the main beneficiaries from the fund. Many improvements have been introduced including pathways, planting, bulbs and benches for the enjoyment of local people. Amounts accrued as at 31.10.23 are listed at the end of this report.
- 1.6 Technically for woodland areas and copses, it means that the Parish Council is funding support and improvements in spaces that it does not maintain or for which it does not have responsibility.
- 1.7 The fund does not include hours of Parish team support in the collection and removal of volunteer waste or project work completed by the team.
- 1.8 Five years on, it is timely for the Parish Council to review and reshape the Clean and Green fund. It could be a single pot that groups can access as and when or it could be fixed to annual amounts rather than accruals.

## **2. Costs/Budget**

- 2.1 In previous years, the Parish Council budgeted £8-10,000 in the annual budget for

the Volunteer Reward fund and expenditure was in the region of £2,000 in total. In the current financial year, the budget was removed with a view that any expenditure would be accepted as an overspend. The majority of accruals have had sums carried over each year for a number of years.

### 3. Financial & Other Implications

3.1 The Parish Council has a number of options including:

- Continue with the fund as is and add a budget for the volunteer reward grant in the 2024/25 budget
- Revise the fund to a single allocation that groups can access e.g. £360 per annum (£30 x 12 months for groups meeting monthly)
- Scale the fund down e.g. amount allocated to groups only
- Recharging for team support for non Parish responsibilities support
- For groups that have accrued funds, discussion could be sought to determine how these should be spent and whether there is a definite timeframe

### 4. Recommendations

4.1 That this Committee resolves how the fund is allocated and budgeted in 2023/25

4.2 That the Council considers allocating up to £360 for expenditure in that financial year to each group for 2024/25

Groups/Neighbourhoods	Purchases	Balance
Blagrove Community Plot	£20.00	£52.00
Freshbrook Residents		£820.00
Grange Park Residents		£1720.80
Greendown Copse		£1115.12
Nine Elms Residents		£50.00
Peatmoor Residents		£120.00
Peatmoor Community Woodland	£353.20	£1461.80
Ramleaze / Middleleaze Residents		£190.00
Rivermead / Plastic Free Swindon		£340.00
Shaw Ridge FAB		£1318.93
Shaw Residents / Assoc		£1190.00
Toothill Residents		£1322.50
Westlea Church		£600.00
Westlea Park	£237.58	£158.74
Westlea Residents		£385.00
		£11,495.67

Paula Harrison, Parish Manager