

Summary

The Eden Area Plan 2014-17 identifies developing strong and resilient communities as a focus. Members of the Local Committee for Eden are aware of the need to address rural isolation issues and in developing an Eden Local Committee priority project list they have considered key local information for the area and developed a shared understanding of strengths and weaknesses across the area to consider how best to support local communities. Two key opportunities have emerged out of this and these are:

- Supporting the development of Parish Council websites
- Supporting the development of social eating projects

Recommendation

Eden Local Committee are asked to support the funding of a range of projects to support the development of Parish Council websites and community driven social dining projects within their financial year 2017/2018 with grant funding of £10,000.

Background**Parish Council Websites**

It can be difficult for people to find out what activities are happening across Eden at any given time.

Information is shared through local newsletters and the Compass websites but there can be gaps at a local level. In order to enhance the existing offer, Eden Local Committee would like to encourage Parish Councils to add a Community activity page to their website.

The Community Development Team will create a template for this page and the proposal is that a grant will be available for:

- Clerk time
- CALC web and social media training
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This will make community activity more visible and accessible to residents, visitors, health professionals and advice services.

Lunch Clubs/Social Dining Projects

The funding provides an opportunity for local groups to set up lunch clubs/dining clubs in their village or neighbourhood. This will enable local residents, (especially older people) to socialise, reducing social isolation and contributing towards resilient communities.

Research confirms that such clubs are linked with:

- an individual's happiness,
- the number of friends they have,
- their connection with the local community and
- overall satisfaction with life.

The proposal is to offer a small grant fund to encourage and enable communities to set up lunch clubs and other food projects with a view to reducing isolation and improving physical and mental wellbeing.

Timescales:

The grant funding for these projects, alongside the Good Neighbour scheme grant, will be launched by the end of January 2018 under the name of "Building Stronger Communities".

A comprehensive launch plan is being developed to ensure extensive knowledge of the grant throughout Eden. It is intended that advice sessions will be held across the district to encourage local communities to apply for the funding and to ensure the key objectives and criteria are understood.

The funding will be distributed, in principle, to local communities, by the end of March 2018.