

## **Carsington and Hopton Parish Council**

### **Agenda item: 18/15**

#### **Issue: Finalised Wind Farm Community Funding Agreement.**

**Recommendation:** Welcome the finalised agreement. Note the contents of this paper. Agree to formalise a grant awarding policy to ameliorate the risks identified and ensure that grants are made in a timely fashion. Make suggestions for this policy.

**Timing:** The agreement is dated 15<sup>th</sup> April 2015. The Parish Council has not yet spent the £2050 sent as an ex-gratia payment in the last financial year.

**Members Interests:** None known.

**Further Information:** Clerk

**Background:** As a result of the erection of the wind turbines on Carsington Pastures westcoastenergy/GDF Suez (wce) have offered to pay £8200 pa (index linked) to be shared between Brassington and Carsington & Hopton Parish Councils.

**Discussion:** The agreement allows wide use of the monies for conservation, education, recreation, rural regeneration and alleviation of fuel poverty, within the parish boundaries. Monies cannot be used for politics, religion, bringing wce into disrepute or unlawfully.

The Parish Council is to administer their share of the fund and make grants. Examples are given: improve the village green, village school and playing fields, village hall, local church roof, nature projects run by local school children and water supplies to allotments.

Ten percent of the monies can be used for administration and management. The Clerk has certain duties: acknowledge receipt of monies within 7 days, send copies of minutes of meetings resolving expenditure to wce within 3 months, sending copies of certified accounts each year, and supplying reasonable requested evidence of how monies have been used and how the Parish Council decided. This requires that the Parish Council have a grant awarding policy. Grant can be withheld if there is a material breach. The agreement itself is confidential subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Guidance is sort on the rules for awarding grants.

**Financial Implications:** The annual grant is 46% of the Parish Council's annual income.

**Risk Implications:** The grant is at risk: if the Clerk does not carry out the duties prescribed and if the Council cannot demonstrate that the monies are within the prescribed purposes, how they have been allocated, together with the associated outcomes. According to Grant Thornton (PCs external auditors) the accounts are likely to be qualified if reserves build up to more than 2.5 times the precept, unless it is clearly minuted at a full meeting that monies are being kept for a specific purpose.

**Kate Murray**

**Clerk**