



Organisation Name	The Ashley Green and District Community Association
Project Name	Internet Access For All
Funding Stream	Health & Wellbeing/Community Area Priorities
Total Cost of project	£1314
Amount of Match Funding	£0
Amount being applied for	£1314
Amount Recommended	£1314

### Project Summary

This funding application is for the installation and operation of Fibre Wi-Fi in the Memorial Hall and Old School for the benefit of the whole Community and will be free to all. This application covers all 3 of the Community Board Funding categories, but primarily sits in the Health and Wellbeing fund or Community Area Priorities fund. This application has the full support of the Ashley Green and Whelpley Hill Parish Council, who have their meetings in the Old School.

The cost of technology is still an issue for some sectors of our communities. Even for those people who can afford the devices to access the Internet, the on-going Internet connection fees may be too much or difficult to justify for infrequent use. Importantly there are people, especially the older generation (silver surfers) that find it difficult to use technology. Once the Wi-Fi is installed the AGDCA will offer free training for both computer use and smart phone usage.

### How does the project address local priorities?

The project addresses the Health and Wellbeing priority for many reasons. Despite Ashley Green being a lovely village with a good community spirit, it lacks the opportunity for villagers, especially the older generation and young mothers, to meet socially and develop the community spirit. Further the village has the full range demographic population, and we are mindful that there are villagers who do not have access to the internet or at least good quality internet. Mobile reception in the village is notoriously poor causing users' problems in contacting people. The village is blessed with 4 community buildings, the Memorial Hall, the Old School and 2 ancillary buildings the Green Room and Wykes Room where a range of activities taking place including Church Sunday School, Good neighbours Group, Lunch & Chat, Youth drama, Pilates. The village is actively addressing these issues with the children's' playground and wellbeing centre project currently under the earlier planning stages. Integral to the project are plans for a communal sitting area, served by a coffee outlet and access to wi-fi for the benefits of all users. However, the village aspires to develop the community spirit further by attempting to appeal to the whole demographic spectrum by offering free fibre Wi-Fi to all in the village buildings.

### How does the project align with the values, objectives and corporate priorities of Buckinghamshire Council?

#### Strengthening Our Communities :

The older demographic - often the prospect of new technology can be daunting to people who grew up without computers or the Internet. The key advantage of wireless networks for older people is that they simplify and automate connectivity to the Internet because modern devices are now easily connected to the Internet via Wi-Fi

and remember those connections, re-establishing them automatically on seeing the same Wi-Fi again.

The younger demographic - younger people often live with parents or guardians or peers. Their access issues are likely to be due to not being in control of the Wi-Fi equipment and Internet connection. So, for example they may not be able to access the content they like without others knowing what it is and possibly assenting to it. Also, low quality hardware and Internet services that are out of their control may also limit what they are able to do. Providing good quality services and anonymity may be attractive to these people.

#### How does the project achieve value for money?

##### Expected growth potential:

It is expected that as Wi-Fi would be attractive to potential hirers of our community facilities and if the halls become more attractive to hirers, this will improve the funding position of the Community Association, thus enabling further good works for the community.

##### Costs Analysis:

We have researched the options available and we have decided to go with XLN, as they are a specialist small business broadband company who have come recommended through multiple sources including Community Impact Bucks Forum. It is important to note that for internet provision, provider's offers vary all the time, so hopefully we can negotiate a good deal, but that can only be done at the time of confirming a booking. The price below is what was available when we were in discussions talked with XLN.

There is also an environmental benefit due to community buildings everywhere wasting significant amounts of money in energy bills, where it is so difficult to manage timers on the heating and hot water systems, meaning the building's heating systems remain on when a class is cancelled. Modern Wi-Fi enabled timers would allow the timers to access remotely and adjusted on an actual usage basis. This would save significant costs on energy bills over the year, but also save the country's valuable resources and help reduce CO2 emissions.

Total cost for installation of Wi-Fi per Community Building is £657, which includes installation and a minimum 2-year contract operation period.

#### Community Board Coordinator comments

As referenced by Ashley Green, poor internet connection and quality in rural areas is a barrier for many people, especially true at present regarding the pandemic with more residents/students at home to work and study and families isolated in lockdown. However, the longer term benefits for residents include the older generation as this may help to reduce isolation, the younger generation who will have a safe place to attend which will also include social benefits and the wider community generally who may not have the opportunity to gain a connection, be able to afford the cost of access or have the required skills. The availability of a free Wi-Fi connection can also be an important attraction for people. A number of surveys have shown that people remember where it is available and go out of their way to visit those locations. This creates an opportunity to engage with a larger section of the community. The AGDCA has been asked by a number of hirers whether Wi-Fi is available.

**The applicant will be required to agree to terms and conditions, which include a monitoring agreement, as discussed with the Community Board Coordinator before the fund will be formally awarded.**