Report of The Defibrillator Working Group
Parish Council Meeting – January 2024

Deployment of Defibrillator, issues arising and action taken:

The defibrillator was deployed on November 23rd.
The volunteer who collected the defibrillator reported that she had phoned the Volunteer Emergency Telephone Support (VETS) line to ask for some help, but she got no response from any of the other volunteers. It transpired that no one was at home meaning that there was no one to receive her call. However, Claire Diggins' mobile number is on the system and when she tried to answer the call, the line was silent and she was not able to be connected to the caller.

The VETS line has been tested and although it works with landline numbers it does not work with Claire's mobile number – the only mobile number in use on the system. This is being investigated by the Community Heartbeat Trust who provides the VETS line and they will report back once the issue has been identified and hopefully resolved by the telephony company.

Claire has been in contact with the two other people who assisted with the resuscitation attempt, to thank them for their efforts and also to find out whether any counselling was required. Both of them reported that they were well-supported and had no need of counselling. They both felt that everything that could have been done was done and although they were distressed by the outcome, they were at peace with themselves. There did however, appear to be some lack of awareness in relation to retrieving the defibrillator from the cabinet and/or calling the VETS line for assistance – it transpired that the volunteer who collected the defibrillator just happened to be walking past at the time.

One of the other issues that arose was that the ambulance service had difficulty in locating The Brickfields because there is no road sign so this led to delays in them arriving at the property.

Gerda Gibbs, Claire Diggins and Sue Read met on Monday 27th November to discuss the above issues. It was felt that The Brickfields and The Common and possibly other unadopted roads were both difficult for the emergency service to locate and that the situation would be helped by road signs. The issue of What3 Words was also raised as 85% of emergency services use it as an aid to navigation. It was therefore decided to refer the matter to the Advice and Information Working Group and this was done on December 2nd. The matter is ongoing and the Advice and Information Working Group will update the Parish Council on progress.

A debrief was held for the volunteers on December 11th where the volunteer who was involved in the resuscitation attempt fed back to the group. In addition to the VETS line we have a WhatsApp Group so it was agreed that we would make use of that to notify all other volunteers if help is required. It was also felt that we should open up our Basic life support and defibrillator refresher training to the wider community to familiarise more people with

the defibrillator so that they have the confidence to use it if no volunteers are available. It will also give us the opportunity to recruit additional volunteers.

It is also proposed that a leaflet with clear instructions on retrieving the defibrillator and calling the VETS line is distributed to all properties in the Parish.

Refresher Training:

The annual refresher training for the volunteers will be due in February. It is proposed that we ask Simon Drewitt of ECCH to provide this once more and the Parish Council is requested to approve a budget of £75 for this. As per the above, it is proposed that this is opened up to the wider community as Simon has indicated that he is happy with any number of attendees.

Mobile Reception:

In the event of an emergency, our ability to respond may be handicapped by the very poor mobile signal in the Parish. It is proposed that the Parish Council writes to our MP to see if he can do anything about it.

In other news:

1) Somerleyton School has installed a community defibrillator on the outer wall of the school. Claire will get in contact with the Head Teacher for further information and will update our volunteers accordingly.
2) The empty defibrillator cabinet at the boatyard has been removed.

Claire Diggins
Gerda Gibbs