

Dear Madam Chairman,

I am writing to you in your capacity with the Parish Council, in my capacity as a Community First Responder (CFR) in the village.

You may know I have been volunteering with South Central Ambulance Service for over 10 years now covering Goring and Streatley. In that time, being a CFR has changed considerably, with huge amounts of extra compulsory training being undertaken by us so that we can carry out a much wider ranging of services to patients and use many more pieces of equipment which we carry with us. This allows us to attend and be useful in a great many more life-threatening situations. One of the wonderful things that happens when a CFR attends on scene, is that the patient, just believes that someone from the ambulance service has arrived and that help is on hand. For me that is incredibly rewarding, and of course we give as much help as we possibly can. This can range from reassurance that people are going to be ok to life saving interventions. Indeed, there are many cases of concern for welfare and non-injury falls where we are the only person they will see from the ambulance service as we can assist and then, with the appropriate telephone back up, leave the patient without any further resources being required to attend.

One of the slightly more challenging issues with this, from a charity perspective, is that those people who we do care for, frequently do not realize that we are volunteers and just believe that we are a part of the NHS and paid for through their taxes. It is thoroughly inappropriate on most occasions to bring up the fact that we are volunteers and that our services (the training and equipment, uniforms and telephones etc) are all funded by a charity. Over the last five years the charity has struggled to raise money and recently has made the very hard decision that all but three of the CFR vehicles in our each county covered by the ambulance service are to be removed as they can no longer afford to run them. In Goring (and Streatley) we have met the highest targets for responder hours, response times and Category 1 miss areas and therefore it is likely that we will be given access to one of the three vehicles that are staying in area. The other two will be placed in large towns. However, as part of this financial shortfall we have to try to raise, in each county, at least £12,000 per annum. I have personally put up a huge argument that we should be able to keep the vehicle in this area as we are rural, but with the river crossing we can get to many places easily, and we are not near a local ambulance station so the CFRs are essential to meeting the local need of making sure the ambulance service gets to life threatening illness quick enough to be of use. I therefore am taking it on myself to try to raise £4000 of this amount every year.

In the past the Parish Council has very kindly helped with raising money for equipment for us to use in the village. I hope you feel that we, the CFRs, have provided a valuable resource to the village. Whilst I realize that the Parish Council is very limited in the money it is allowed to donate to good causes from the precept through section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972, I am hoping that the service we provide is counted amongst the very valuable.

I would ask that the Parish Council kindly consider making a donation to the South Central Ambulance Charity either as a one-off donation, or if you feel able to, on a recurring basis if all other things are equal, your funding allows this to be the case. If you feel able to do this, it will be helping to ensure that we are able to maintain a CFR presence in the village, which we hope you feel is a valuable resource for all our residents.