Defibrillator Management, Maintenance and Replacement Planning Discussion Document November 2026

1. Purpose of the Report

This report explains the Parish Council's responsibilities for managing and maintaining the Greywell community defibrillator. It sets out the current maintenance and registration arrangements, identifies the responsibilities that need to be agreed and highlights the need to plan for the defibrillator's eventual replacement.

Councillors are asked to:

- Agree arrangements for carrying out and recording maintenance checks.
- Confirm who will be responsible for those checks.
- Consider whether the Parish Clerk should become the nominated contact for the defibrillator.
- Begin making financial provision for replacement.

2. Background and Current Arrangements

The Parish Council owns the Greywell community defibrillator and is responsible for ensuring that it remains operational, available for emergency use and is properly maintained.

The defibrillator was purchased from the Community Heartbeat Trust (CHT). The Council currently pays an annual support fee of £135 plus VAT, which covers the cost of replacement parts if required under the support arrangement.

Two systems are used to manage the defibrillator:

- **WebNos™:** Used to record maintenance checks, monitor the defibrillator's readiness and maintain a record of inspections and any faults identified.
- **The Circuit:** The national defibrillator network used by ambulance services to locate registered defibrillators during a cardiac arrest emergency.

These systems serve different but complementary purposes. The Circuit helps emergency services locate the defibrillator, while WebNos provides the maintenance records needed to demonstrate that the equipment is being properly managed.

3. Defibrillator Registration, Maintenance and Responsibilities

The Council must ensure that the defibrillator remains registered for emergency use and that regular maintenance checks are completed and recorded.

3.1 Maintenance Checks

CHT advises that the following checks should be carried out:

- Weekly: A basic visual check of the defibrillator and its cabinet.
- Monthly: A more comprehensive inspection of the equipment and its readiness for use.

All checks should be recorded in WebNos. Any faults or concerns identified during an inspection should be reported and addressed promptly.

Keeping accurate records provides evidence that the defibrillator is being properly managed. These records may be required for governance reviews, insurance purposes or investigations following a serious incident.

The Council should agree who will carry out the checks and ensure that suitable arrangements are in place to maintain continuity during absences or changes in Council membership.

3.2 Registration with The Circuit

The Circuit is the national defibrillator network used by ambulance services across the UK. When someone calls 999 following a suspected cardiac arrest, emergency call handlers can use the network to identify a nearby registered defibrillator and direct a member of the public to it where appropriate.

The Greywell defibrillator is registered with The Circuit. The Council should ensure that this registration remains active and that the required status updates are submitted every two months.

These updates help ambulance services establish whether the defibrillator remains available for emergency use. However, they do not replace the more detailed maintenance checks and records held in WebNos.

3.3 Nominated Guardian and Responsibility for Checks

Cllr Barter is currently recorded as the defibrillator's Guardian on The Circuit.

Councillors may wish to consider transferring the Guardian role to the Parish Clerk and using the Clerk's email address as the main contact. This would provide greater continuity when councillors change roles or leave the Council and reduce the risk of administrative or access difficulties.

The Council should also agree which councillors or designated individuals will undertake the weekly and monthly maintenance checks. Responsibility for recording checks in WebNos and submitting the two-monthly updates to The Circuit should be clearly allocated.

The key requirement is that the defibrillator remains registered, is checked regularly and has a clear, accessible record of its maintenance.

4. Defibrillator Age and Replacement Planning

The Greywell defibrillator will reach 10 years of age in 2027 and is now outside its warranty period.

CHT recommends that owners begin planning and budgeting for replacement from the tenth year onwards, with replacement taking place no later than the twelfth year, subject to the relevant manufacturer's guidance and the condition of the equipment.

As the defibrillator is medical equipment, a significant fault may mean that the unit needs to be taken out of service and replaced rather than repaired. Replacement could therefore become necessary at short notice.

The Council should begin planning financially for replacement now, rather than waiting until the equipment reaches the end of its anticipated service life.

4.1 Battery Replacement in 2027

The defibrillator's battery is due for replacement in 2027. This replacement is covered by the existing annual support plan.

Defibrillator batteries typically have a lifespan of approximately four years, although the manufacturer's recommendations for the particular model should be followed.

CHT has advised that the replacement battery due in 2027 could potentially be transferred to a replacement defibrillator.

4.2 Estimated Replacement Cost

CHT has advised that a replacement defibrillator would currently cost approximately £1,100, excluding VAT, shipping and a battery.

The estimate excludes the battery because the replacement battery due in 2027 may be transferable to a new unit.

The final cost will depend on supplier prices, inflation, equipment specifications and any additional items required at the time of purchase. The Council should therefore treat £1,100 as an initial estimate rather than a guaranteed future price.

Making financial provision through the next budget-setting process would allow the Council to build up funds gradually and reduce the risk of an unexpected demand on the parish budget.

5. Recommended Actions

The following actions are recommended to ensure that the defibrillator continues to be properly managed and that the Council is prepared for its eventual replacement.

5.1 Confirm maintenance responsibilities

Agree who will undertake the weekly visual checks and monthly inspections. Ensure that all checks are recorded in WebNos and that any faults or concerns are addressed promptly.

5.2 Maintain registration with The Circuit

Ensure that the defibrillator remains registered and that its status is updated every two months. Consider appointing the Parish Clerk as the nominated Guardian contact to improve continuity and administrative oversight.

5.3 Plan for replacement

Include provision for the eventual replacement of the defibrillator in the next budget-setting process. Review the estimated replacement cost as part of future budget planning.

6. Decisions Required from the Council

Councillors are asked to:

1. **Maintenance:** Agree that weekly visual checks and monthly inspections will continue in accordance with CHT guidance, with all checks recorded through WebNos.
2. **Responsibility for checks:** Agree which councillors or designated individuals will be responsible for carrying out and recording the maintenance checks.
3. **The Circuit registration:** Confirm that the defibrillator will remain registered with The Circuit and consider appointing the Parish Clerk as the nominated Guardian contact.
4. **Age and condition:** Note that the defibrillator will reach 10 years of age in 2027 and is outside its warranty period.
5. **Financial planning:** Agree when financial provision for replacement should begin. Should this be during the 2027-2028 budget-setting process, taking account of CHT's guidance and the estimated replacement cost?

7. Conclusion

The Greywell community defibrillator is an important emergency resource. The Council needs to ensure that it remains available for use, is maintained appropriately and has a clear record of inspections.

Using WebNos for maintenance records and The Circuit for emergency service registration, together with clearly allocated responsibilities, will help the Council maintain appropriate oversight of the equipment.

With the defibrillator approaching 10 years of age in 2027, it is also prudent to begin planning for its eventual replacement. Making financial provision in advance will help the Council manage this future expense and reduce the risk of an unexpected demand on the parish budget.