

Proposal For Purchase of Defibrillator (AED)

The Property Committee have asked me to put forward a proposal that the church should purchase a defibrillator also known as an AED (Automatic External Defibrillator), as I have some previous experience of them.

An AED is a device that gives a high energy electric shock to the heart of someone who is in cardiac arrest. This shock is called defibrillation and it is an essential part in trying to save the life of someone who is in cardiac arrest.

AEDs should be used in addition to cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) which all First Aiders and many others are taught and are familiar with.

You do not need to be trained to use an AED – anyone can use it. They are simple and easy to use, and you do not need any training. There are clear instructions on how to attach the pads, the AED then assesses the heart rhythm and will only instruct you to deliver a shock if it is needed. You cannot deliver a shock accidentally; the AED will only allow you to shock if it is needed. Some AEDs are automatic, so this decision is made for you.

Research by The British Heart Foundation shows that using an AED within 3–5 minutes of collapse can produce survival rates as high as 50–70%. For those who do not receive CPR and early defibrillation, the likelihood of survival is poor, with only 5% expected to survive. For every minute without defibrillation their chance of survival decreases by 10%. Survival from cardiac arrest doubled when an AED is used rather than waiting until emergency services arrive, persons who received an AED shock have far greater chances at survival than those who did not.

There is a question whether the AED should be installed internally within the church, or should it be 24h publicly accessible by installing the unit outside in a specially designed lockable cabinet. The cabinet would be secured with a keypad lock and the code would be known to any emergency services and would also be available by calling 999 or 112. The cabinet would need an electricity supply from the church as it is a heated cabinet to protect the AED.

There may also be Listed Building issues to consider with an externally mounted cabinet.

Costs

The current cost of an AED is between £800 and £1800 depending on the model and whether it is automatic or not. The cheaper ones are semi-automatic and are designed to be only used with adults, these require different contact pads to be used with children. The more expensive units are fully automatic and are switchable between adults and children and use the same contact pads for both but deliver a lower shock for children.

There are no ongoing costs, other than replacing the contact pads (approx £120 every 2-3 years) and replacing the battery (approx £260 every 5 years).

The cost of an external cabinet would be an additional £600 to £700 depending on the model decided, additionally there would be costs required for the installation of the necessary electricity supply and the ongoing electricity costs for supplying the cabinet.

Like any insurance policy, hopefully, the AED will never need to be used, but if it is, it could save a life.

I realise this issue was discussed previously at a Stewards Meeting and at a Church Meeting in January 2020, but I would ask the Stewards to thoughtfully consider the proposal to purchase an AED, whether it is for internal use within the church, or for an externally mounted unit.