

## **Village Halls Update**

<i>Portfolio Holder</i>	<i>Cllr Nick Weeks</i>
<i>Strategic Director:</i>	<i>Rina Singh, Place &amp; Performance</i>
<i>Assistant Director:</i>	<i>Helen Rutter, Communities</i>
<i>Service Manager:</i>	<i>Helen Rutter, Area Development Manager East</i>
<i>Lead Officers:</i>	<i>Tim Cook, Neighbourhood Development Officer</i>
<i>Contact Details:</i>	<i>tim.cook@southsomerset.gov.uk or (01963) 435088</i>

### **Purpose of the Report**

This report brings the Committee up to date on recent improvements to village halls in Area East, and the support provided by SSDC.

### **Public Interest**

Supporting and helping to improve the work of voluntary community organisations in the towns and villages across Area East.

### **Recommendation**

To note and comment on the report

### **Background**

There are 36 village halls in Area East, and there has been a strong tradition of SSDC working closely with village halls to improve their usage through both capital improvements and support for village hall management committees.

### **Area East support for halls**

Members last received a detailed report of the support that the Area Development team has provided to halls in the area in March 2014. The table below gives some details about halls supported financially over the last year and halls with ongoing improvement projects.

Village Hall	Project	Support received	Update
North Cadbury Village Hall	New toilets and chair store	£12,284	Work started on 5 <sup>th</sup> Jan 2015 and is due to be completed mid-February
Templecombe Village Hall	Refurbishment of front exterior of the hall.	£2,738	The work has been completed.
Galhampton Village Hall	Replacement hall.	£12,500	Revised application submitted to The Big Lottery. Outcome will be known in February and a review of SSDC support will happen at this point. Local fundraising total now stands at over £90,000.
Sutton Montis Village Hall	Extension and refurbishment to existing facilities.	To reapply once Planning permission for the new scheme has been secured.	Revised planning application to be submitted. Application for funding likely to come back to AEC in June.

### Other support available

The Community Council for Somerset (CCS) continues to provide advice and support to halls in the area on a range of issues and the Hallmark scheme continues.

### Community Buildings Loan Scheme

CCS has operated a Loan Scheme for community building management committees for a number of years. Loans can be awarded, up to a maximum of £3,000 to subscribing community building members, towards the cost of a specific project. Interest is charged at 3% and loans are repaid over a three or five year term.

### Hallmark

Many halls in South Somerset are working towards achieving 'Hallmark' status – a scheme developed by the Community Council in partnership with the District and County Councils, to encourage good practice and management. Volunteer 'inspectors' (from other village halls) visit applicants to look at how their hall is running, and using an agreed set of criteria, judge the hall to be either Hallmark Level 1, 2 or 3.

- **Hallmark 1** Focuses on the management and administration of the charity
- **Hallmark 2** covers health, safety, security and licenses

- **Hallmark 3** Focuses community and social awareness, forward planning and development. It also includes disabled access, communication, promotion of the hall

Halls in Area East with Hallmark 1	Halls in Area East with Hallmark 1 and 2	Halls in Area East with Hallmark 1,2 and 3
Barton St David	Blackford Reading room	Caryford Hall
Corton Denham Village Hall	Charlton Musgrove Village Hall	North Cadbury Village Hall
	Cucklington Village Hall	
	Davis Hall, West Camel	

The table above presents Information obtained from CCS website. Hallmark awards are time limited and work to promote the scheme is ongoing.

### **Future of Village Hall support**

The Community Council for Somerset is part of the 'Action with Communities in Rural England' (Acre) network which exists to support communities to help themselves. Acre receives funding from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) as part of a four year agreement and this agreement is due to end in March 2015. Acre has been working on plans to become more sustainable and identify new generated income streams which it has been working towards. There has been some uncertainty about the future funding from Defra and every indication was that Acre should expect no more funding for 2015/16. This would have had a significant effect on the Community Council for Somerset as Defra funds amount to 67% of their costs.

A campaign to encourage Defra to continue the funding which included a petition was organised. A letter, signed by Cllr Ric Pallister on behalf of the authority was been sent to Defra to raise concerns about the loss of a valuable service and to object to the withdrawal of funding.

Defra has confirmed that it will fund the ACRE Network for 2015/16 although amounts have not been confirmed.

### **Securing contributions towards community buildings from planning obligations**

Members will be aware that during 2009/10 we undertook a comprehensive survey with the Sports, Arts & Leisure team to establish the levels of demand and supply for community facilities across South Somerset, with a view to ensuring that when new development takes place, a contribution is made towards improving community buildings where possible.

The first example of improvements to a community building funded, directly from a developer contribution is likely to be in Barton St David. The hall has applied for funds to install replacement windows and an improved heating system.

### **Financial Implications**

None

## **Corporate Priority Implications**

Supporting Village Halls helps to 'maintain and enhance the South Somerset network of leisure and cultural facilities, optimising opportunities for external funding to promote healthy living.' (Focus Four: Health & Communities)

## **Carbon Emissions & Climate Change Implications**

Providing access to good quality, local activities through maintaining a local hall reduces the need to travel which therefore reduces carbon emissions.

## **Equality and Diversity Implications**

Supporting Village Halls and Community facilities increases access to activities for all. Promoting Hallmark Scheme helps to encourage good practice in terms of accessibility and inclusion.