

Area North Committee – 26th March 2008

11. Area North Community Grants (Executive Decision)

Head of Service: Charlotte Jones, Head of Area Development (North)
Lead Officer: Madelaine King-Oakley Support Team Leader North
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Assessing Officer: Leslie Collett, Community Development Officer (01458) 257427

Purpose of the Report

To consider an application made to SSDC for financial support under the SSDC Community Grants Programme.

This report contains one application from Lopen Parochial Church Council.

Recommendation

Members are asked to approve a grant of £7,500 to Lopen Parochial Church Council subject to the standard SSDC Community and Leisure Grants Policies, see **Appendix A**.

The grant to be awarded from the Area North Revenue Budget and the balance to come from the Area North Capital Grants Programme allocation for “Improving Community Halls and Facilities”.

1. Application Details

Name of Applicant	Lopen Parochial Church Council
Project	Installation of toilets in the Sunday School Room
Project description	Construction of a small porch to house a toilet block
Total project cost	£38,046.
Amount requested	£7,500
Special conditions	None
Application assessed by:	Leslie Collett, Community Development Officer (North)
Contact details:	Leslie.collett@southsomerset.gov.uk (01458) 257427

2. Community Grants Assessment Score

The table below shows the grant scoring for this application. In order to be considered, applications need to meet the minimum score of 20 required for SSDC funding under the Capital Grants Scheme.

Category	Score	Maximum
A Eligibility	Y	
B Target Groups	2	6
C Project	5	5
D Capacity of Organisation	13	15
E Financial need	4	5
F Innovation	2	3
Total	26	34

3. Background information

Lopen is a small village of 117 houses with a population of 250 people, without any regular bus service to local towns. The importance of a strong community/church spirit is fundamental in strengthening the village as a whole. The completion of this project will increase the numbers using the Sunday School Room and help in building the community spirit.

The Parochial Church Council is responsible for the thatched, Grade II listed Sunday School room which is in a conservation area, as well as All Saints Church and its fabric. They have a policy of building up reserves against the regular re-thatching of the Sunday School room approximately every 15 years at a cost of £18-20,000, in addition to the fabric upkeep of the church itself. Their accounts show reserves higher than you might expect, but this is good house-keeping against future expenditure.

Lopen has never had a village hall and is unlikely to build one in the foreseeable future, due to the high building and maintenance cost that would fall upon such a small community. Over the last 200 years the Sunday School room has acted as substitute village hall and is likely to continue to do so for many years to come.

4. About the project

The Sunday School room is adjacent to the church and is owned by the Parochial Church Council and has been and still is the closest to a village hall that the community of Lopen has. The Sunday School room consists of one room capable of seating up to forty people and has a small serving area in one corner. The room is approximately 200 years old and is available for the whole community to use.

There are no toilet facilities and notably the very young and some of the older members of the community have restricted usage of the room.

The room is at present used by the Parish Council, Lopen “Just Women Group”, Lopen History Group, Parochial Church Council, for village suppers, as a Polling Station and bookings by individual members of the community.

The grant applied for from SSDC will part fund the capital costs of building a small porch extension to enable the installation of a toilet in the Sunday School Room, which will be Disability Discrimination Act compliant. This will allow a wider community use making it much more attractive for both formal and social events to take place.

The project has been well planned and has the benefit of full planning permission and full listed building consent:-

Planning Permission granted on the 17th May 2007. Application No 07/02169/FUL

Listed Building Consent granted on the 17th May 2007. Application No 07/0217/LBC

Building Regulations Full Plans Passed 21st November 2007. Application No 07/09368/OTHV

5. Lopen Parish Plan

In June 2006 the Village Plan was adopted by the Parish Council. In response to “problems experienced in using the Sunday School rooms”, 75% highlighted the lack of toilet facilities, 38% said they would use the Sunday School room for social gatherings which they could not hold at home. It can be said with some certainty that this percentage would rise dramatically with the provision of a WC.

6. Cost and match funding

Just over 55% of the funding for this project is already secure; a full breakdown of the funding secured is detailed in the table below.

The cost of the work is estimated to be £38,046 (this includes capital costs of building the extension, professional fees and a contingency sum of £4,700.)

Funding sources are as follows:-

Confirmed Funds

<u>Estimated Cost of Project</u>	<u>£38,046</u>	
Parish Council	£ 300	
Awards For All	£10,000	
Local fundraising	£ 4,564	
Diocese of Bath and Wells	£ 5,000	
Anonymous commercial donation	£ 500	
Tesco stores	£ 20	
Augusta Westlands	£ 400	
Ward Members fund	£ 200	
Total	£20,984	55%
Contribution from SSDC	£ 7,500	20%
Total	£28,484	75%
Remaining shortfall	£ 9,562	

Applied for funds

Additional funding applications have been submitted to the Church and Community Fund and the Co-operative Community fund and together with local fundraising activity, the Parochial Church Council and the Community Development Officer are confident that the remaining shortfall will be found.

7. In Conclusion

In this day and age it seems that the installation of toilets at this facility is long overdue. The benefit to the users of the Sunday School room and the opportunity to increase usage of this small but vital community resource justifies the expenditure incurred.

It is recommended that this project should be supported by a grant of £7,500.

Financial Implications

There is currently £35,333 unallocated in the Area North Capital Programme (Community Halls and Facilities 2007-10). Awarding this grant of £7,500 will leave £27,833 remaining. However, it is recommended that any remaining balance in the Area North Community Grants Revenue Budget is drawn first and the remainder to come from the Area North Capital Programme.

Corporate Priorities

Supporting local community-led projects help to meet the following corporate objectives:

1. Increase to 75% by 2012 the residents who feel the Council gives good value for money
2. Maintain above 75% the people satisfied with the way the Council runs the district
9. Identify and address the particular issues affecting rural areas
11. Work in partnership with others to improve the health prospects for all
15. Increase by 65% by 2010 the people who feel engaged in and can influence decisions that affect their communities
16. Maintain above 80% the people satisfied with their neighbourhoods as a place to live
18. 80% of residents and businesses satisfied with the quality of the local natural and built environment by 2012

Other Implications

Supporting local community projects help to meet the following priorities in the Area North Development Plan:

- 1.2 Support the production, and delivery of parish plans, and other community led initiatives which aim to promote involvement and self-help for local communities
- 3.6 Support communities to maintain and develop facilities and activities
- 3.9 Promote and protect quality of the natural and environment.
- 4.2 Strengthen links between town /parish councils and SSDC

Background Papers: *Community Grant Application Number AN/07/037*
Lopen Parish Plan