

Area North Committee – 26 October 2011

8. Area North Community Grants – The Kingsbury Episcopi Village Shop (Executive Decision)

Strategic Director: Rina Singh, Place and Performance
Assistant Director: Helen Rutter & Kim Close, Communities
Service Manager: Charlotte Jones, Area Development Manager (North)
Lead Officer: Les Collett, Community Development Officer (North)
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Purpose of the Report

For councillors to consider the request for a community grant towards the creation of a new village shop in Kingsbury Episcopi.

Public Interest

Kingsbury Episcopi Community Enterprise Services Ltd has applied for financial assistance from the Area North Community Grants programme. The application has been assessed by the Community Development Officer who has submitted this report to allow the Area North Committee to make an informed decision of the application.

Recommendations

Members are asked to approve £10,000 towards the Kingsbury Episcopi Village Shop project to be allocated from the Area North Capital Programme – Local Priorities, subject to the standard terms and conditions for SSDC Community Grants, see Appendix A, and the following special conditions:

- a) The written approval of South Somerset District Council regarding the future application of funds is required if the group dissolves and the asset is re-sold or used for other purposes.
- b) The written approval of South Somerset District Council to the agreement between the Kingsbury Episcopi Amenities Fund & Improvements Committee and Kingsbury Community Enterprise Ltd to site the shop on land owned by the Kingsbury Episcopi Amenities Fund & Improvements Committee.
- c) The award is subject to appropriate planning consent being granted, and the award of this grant is made without prejudice. The applicant to note that this decision doesn't not imply or confer consents.

Application Details

Name of Applicant	Kingsbury Episcopi Community Enterprise Services Ltd
Project	The Kingsbury Episcopi Village Shop
Project description	Purchase and installation of a purpose built village shop
Total project cost	£25,157
Amount requested from SSDC	£10,000 (40%)
Recommended special conditions	<p>The written approval of South Somerset District Council regarding the future application of funds is required if the group dissolves and the asset is re-sold or used for other purposes.</p> <p>The written approval of South Somerset District Council to the agreement between the Kingsbury Episcopi Amenities Fund & Improvements Committee and Kingsbury Community Enterprise Ltd to site the shop on land owned by the Kingsbury Episcopi Amenities Fund & Improvements Committee.</p> <p>The award is subject to appropriate planning consent being granted, and where the award of this grant is made without prejudice. The applicant to note that this decision doesn't not imply or confer consents.</p>
Application assessed by:	Leslie Collett, Community Development Officer – North
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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 22, for SSDC funding under the Community Grants policies.

Category	Score	Maximum
A Eligibility	Y	
B Target Groups	7	7
C Project	5	5
D Capacity of Organisation	15	15
E Financial need	4	7
F Innovation	3	3
Total	34	37

Background

Kingsbury Episcopi is a large village within Area North with over 575 households in the parish. It has a local pub, school, church, produce market, fruit farm which sells a limited selection of seasonal fruit and a cider farm selling cider and apple related produce.

There has been no village shop in the parish since 2002. Local bus services are poor and the nearest shop is around 5 miles away from Kingsbury. Kingsbury is also subject to flooding with many of the roads becoming impassable for extended periods of time. During recent winters and long cold spells, roads have not been gritted, making access out of the village extremely difficult.

About the project

At a parish council meeting in April 2008 the parish council were asked to help the village consider plans to bring back a shop. In October 2008 the Kingsbury Community Shop Project (KCSP) was founded. Following Incorporation in March 2011 this evolved into The Kingsbury Community Enterprise Ltd.

In the past three years funding applications were submitted to the Lottery for the Village SOS project (for a shop, community room and café), but at the final stage the project was not awarded funding. This proved to be a very lengthy process and the committee decided to go back to the residents for feedback via a questionnaire in June 2011. 53% of the 575 households' responded and 88% of those wanted a shop but didn't want to wait a further 3 years. The results led the committee to look at a quickly achievable, cost effective option.

In August 2011 the management group located a second hand, originally custom built, cabin type shop which until June 2011 was used as a village shop in Surrey. The cabin shop was originally built and sited at a cost of £42,000 – it includes everything that Kingsbury Episcopi parish would need to get the project off of the ground. It is Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) compliant with access ramp, plenty of room internally to allow for wheelchair and pushchair access, shelving, air conditioning unit and lighting. As it was built solely to be a shop the original shell is an anti-vandal unit which is reinforced to ensure walls do not bow from the weight inside (which is a common fault for converted portacabins).

The village in Surrey who originally commissioned the shop have now progressed to a new build community shop. Following their success they wish to give another community shop project the opportunity to build on their experience and to pass on the portacabin at a reasonable cost.

The shop would be sited on land owned by the Kingsbury Episcopi Amenities Fund and Improvements Committee (a village based charity) under a letter of agreement for a minimum of 5 years. This location is on the main road though the village, ideal for passing trade, and ease of access for shoppers and suppliers. It is also within comfortable walking distance for most of community and utilises existing car parking.

The shop will supply local products and produce where possible and act as a depot for other services such as dry cleaning and shoe repairs in order to offer convenience and reduce the need for travel. It will also operate a driving pool where volunteers will help the less mobile get to the shop. The target market for shoppers will be parishioners, passing trade, school parents (from out of the area), those attending local events, and visitors from the local caravan and camping site.

The shop is a start up business and will be staffed by a team of volunteers, of which a list of 36 has already been drawn up and other community members showing interest. Experience of similar community run shops show that once trading commences and the association has an active place in the daily lives of residents, many more volunteers will come forward.

The shop will be governed under the rules by The Kingsbury Community Enterprise Ltd (Registered under the Industrial and Provident Societies Acts 1965 – 20).

Advice and support has been received from The Plunkett Foundation (the leading national body for community owned shops and services), and the Social Enterprise Manager for Somerset County Council.

Business plan & finance forecasts.

The project has a full business plan, which has been reviewed and supported by both the SSDC Small Business Support Advisor and Financial Accountant.

The objectives of the village shop is to:

- Have 325 weekly customers shopping locally by the end of year one. This will significantly reduce travel expenses related to top up shopping, have an impact on car usage in the village and benefit shoppers and the environment. Shoppers will have chance for increased social interaction with other villagers and potential reduced social isolation.
- By end of year one, 55 shop volunteers will have enhanced skills – including health and safety, fire and first aid training – leading to increased employment opportunities.
- By end of year one 50% of suppliers will be within 20 mile radius, contributing to sustainability of local economy, enterprise and resource awareness.
- The shop will be a non-profit making enterprise owned and run by the community for the benefit of the community.

3 year profit & loss forecast:

	£ Totals for year 1	£ Totals for year 2	£ Totals for year 3
Turnover	50,400	54,432	58,787
Purchases	35,280	38,102	41,151
Gross Profit	15,120	16,330	17,636
Overheads	12,556	12,962	13,403
Net Profit/Loss	2,564	3,367	4,233

Project Costs

This grant application is for the capital building costs only. The table below shows the breakdown of the project costs.

Item	Cost £
Purchase of purpose built cabin shop	17,000
Service Connections	3,957
Transport costs	2,400
Ground works	1,800
Total	£25,157

Funding plan

The total cost of the project is estimated to be £25,157. A breakdown of the funding for this project is detailed in the table below:

Funding Source	Amount £	Status
Own Funds	5,000	Secured
Kingsbury Episcopi Parish Council	2,500	Secured
Yarlington Housing Group	5,000	Applied for
SSDC Area North	10,000	Applied for
Local fundraising & grant applications	2,657	Ongoing
Total	£25,157	

Parish Information

Parish	Kingsbury Episcopi
Parish population	1300
No. of Households	575
Precept 11-12	£24,900
Band D Charge 11-12	£45.37
Parish Council Contribution	£2,500 (10%)

Parish Council Contribution

The Parish Council is fully supportive of this project. In addition to its £2,500 contribution the Parish Council also funded the forming and registration of the Kingsbury Community Enterprise Limited with the Financial Services Authority under the Industrial & Provident Societies act 1965.

Evidence of support for the project

A letter of support was received from the Plunkett Foundation who has been involved with this project from its initial stages. They state that the community-owned shop sector has been growing at a fast pace and now represents a rational and achievable

alternative for communities who have lost their own village shop along with a 97% survival rate of community-owned shops.

Two questionnaires have been conducted, the first in 2008 and in June 2011. In addition regular feedback is received at a monthly stall at the produce market. Over 50% of households responded to the most recent questionnaire and 88% will support a community shop and would like a shop to provide top up items, rather than full shopping items and would like to purchase fresh items.

Customers will be regularly asked for feedback on the stock, what other items they would like to see on sale.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The application is for £10,000, representing 40% for a capital contribution. This will assist the community to take advantage of an opportunity to purchase a ready made shop which will be trading within the next two months and allow the community to assess the need for a more permanent premises in the future.

The newly formed association is well led and there is good evidence of community support, and future involvement. Regular marketing will be via the bi-monthly newsletter, which is delivered to every household in Kingsbury, and through their own website www.kingsburycommunityshop.co.uk along with promotional events.

Approval of this grant represents an investment by SSSC into an innovative community led project for a key service of particular importance to rural communities. Funding sources for this type of project are currently limited, although the community has been extremely active to raise funds locally.

The opportunity to develop a new village facility, owned and managed by the community represents an investment into sustainable rural communities, and one that may be learned from in the future.

It is recommended to support this application to enable the community to establish a much wanted community shop and allow them to assess longer term plans for a more permanent building to accommodate the shop.

Financial Implications

Following the approval in April 2009 of the revisions to the allocations 'in principle' within the Area North Capital Programme, a sum of £110,658 is currently earmarked for Local Priority projects over a period of 3 years.

Under the updated Communities Grants Policies 2006, up to £12,500 is available for projects applying to the Community Grants scheme.

The capital grant funding for the Kingsbury Episcopi Shop Project of £10,000 can be met from the 2011/12 Area North Capital Programme budget allocation for local priority projects.

Corporate Priority Implications

The project intended services and benefits address a number of corporate priorities within the SSDC Corporate Plan 2009 – 2012, including:

Theme 1 – support economic vitality and prosperity – increase local sustainability

Theme 3 - Improve the housing, health and well-being of our citizens

Theme 4 – Ensure safe, sustainable and cohesive communities

Other Implications

Area North priority 2010-11 – Increase and improve community facilities for all ages.

Carbon Emissions & Adapting to Climate Change Implications (NI188)

Customers reducing the numbers of miles travelled for top up shopping which helps the environment & improves the carbon footprint.

Equality and Diversity Implications

The project will particularly promote involvement by all members of the community. The facility will be fully accessible to disabled people. The shop will also act as a focal point for all sections of the community

Background Papers: *Grant application file AN 11/09*
 Business Plan
