

Area West Committee – 18th January 2012

7. Area West – Requests for Community Grants (Executive Decision)

Strategic Director: Rina Singh (Place and Performance)
Assistant Director: Helen Rutter (Communities)
Service Manager: Andrew Gillespie, Area Development Manager (West)
Lead Officer: Zoë Harris, Community Regeneration Officer and
 Paul Philpott, Community Development Officer
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Purpose of the Report

To consider allocation of funding to the Area West Community Grants Budget and also to consider four specific grant applications.

Public Interest

As indicated in the most recent budget monitoring report (November 2011), through prudent management of grants programmes and in line with the agreed strategy, the Area West capital and revenue budgets are now high enough to encourage new applications from local organisations. To ensure that the Community Grants Scheme continues to support projects in Area West, a publicity programme was undertaken by the Community Development Officer in October 2011, which has resulted in thirty one grant enquiries. This report therefore recommends that the level of potential funding take up of community grants be noted.

So far, applications from community organisations responsible for Combe St Nicholas Village Hall, Crowshute House, Hinton St George & locality Rural Community Services Ltd and Hinton St George Village Hall and Playing Field Trust have been received. These applications have been assessed by the Community Regeneration Officer and the Community Development Officer, their comments and recommendations are contained in this report.

Recommendations

- (1) That members note that the estimated maximum level of take up of community grants as a result of the recent promotion will be around £107,000;
- (2) that £70,000 be allocated as a budget to support this community grants programme from the unallocated capital programme;
- (3) that members approve the following four grants:

Applicant	Project	Grant requested
Combe St Nicholas Village Hall	Replacement kitchen for the Hall	£8,500
Crowshute House, Chard.	Installation of replacement windows and doors	£2,200
Hinton St George Rural Community Services Ltd	Infrastructure repairs to the community shop	£6,000
Hinton St George Village Hall and Playing Field Trust	Installation of a roundabout and refurbishment of a rocking horse.	£4,800

Promotion of the Area West Community Grant Scheme

The SSDC Community Grant Scheme assists local groups to bring forward projects that benefit their communities. Particularly now in a time of economic constraint and with other sources of local support closing, targeted Area West Community Grants can make a real difference to the viability of local projects.

To ensure that community groups remained aware that targeted grant support was available, I was asked in September to plan and undertake a programme of publicity to raise the profile of the Community Grant Scheme, and to ensure projects that meet our funding criteria continue to come forward.

The criteria include encouraging applications from voluntary and charitable organisations, and parish and town councils across a range of sectors including:

- The Arts
- Play and play areas
- Community Transport
- Sports and recreation
- Community Enterprises
- Youth initiatives
- Crime and disorder reduction
- Community activities and initiatives
- Community Halls and equipment
- Museums and Heritage

Before the programme was implemented all Councillors were advised of dates and details of the press release to the local media. I contacted all parish councils, community organisations and the local media throughout Area West. Publicity material also directed readers to further details on the SSDC website.

The publicity programme was launched at the beginning of October 2011. The Area West Community Grant Scheme was featured widely in local newspapers and many enquiries resulted from a promotional feature on local radio.

As a result, thirty-one application packs have been requested across a wide range of projects, which demonstrates the scale of the demand within Area West. In talking to potential applicants it was clear that most of these projects would not have been progressed to this stage without the possibility of grant funding to support them.

It has also become noticeable that the type of enquiries we have received have now also come forward from sectors such as youth work, where alternative funding sources have ceased.

In addition to the applications submitted within this report, a further four applications from across the District are now also close to submission, with many more as work in progress. I am advising and assisting groups when requested, to help prepare their applications.

Projected Levels of Community Grant

If all of the thirty-one potential applications from local community organisations are put forward and the Area West Committee decides to support them in full, it is estimated that the committee would need to allocate £107,000 from revenue and capital budgets.

Timetable

Following the four applications submitted to this Committee, it is the intention that a further four applications will be submitted per Committee. This means that all project applications should be considered by September 2012. Every applicant group will be given the opportunity to speak in support of their project.

Given the high level of response, no further promotion is planned at least until September 2012.

Financial Implications

The specific grants requested in this report can be funded from existing budgets.

However, If all of the thirty-one potential applications from local community organisations are put forward and the Area West Committee decides to support them in full, it is estimated that the total revenue and capital budget would need to be £107,000.

Of this, the provisional estimate of the likely revenue/capital split is £37,000 (revenue) and £70,000 (capital).

There is adequate provision in the Area West revenue budget to enable the committee to fully support all anticipated revenue costs of community projects, if it chooses to do so.

There is a balance of £109,949 in the unallocated capital programme for 2011/12 and future years.

It is recommended that £70,000 of this be allocated as a budget to support this community grants programme so that the committee is enabled also to fully support all anticipated capital costs of community projects, if it chooses to do so.

Grant Application Details

Assessment of Applications

Each application has been through an assessment process against criteria laid down in the SSDC grants policy. Projects achieving a score lower than 22 would not be recommended for financial support. All four applications in this report have been assessed and scored above this threshold.

Combe St Nicholas Village Hall

The Village Hall has hosted a wide variety of clubs and societies from within the village and the surrounding area since 1987.

The Hall provides the opportunity for children and adults to access activities and classes close to home as well as a facility used by individuals and groups from outside of the village. Examples include aerobics classes, upholstery classes, the award winning theatre group and a fortnightly folk dance group. 'Moviola' the village cinema use the hall, and the village school make use of the facility for indoor PE classes and school plays. The hall is regularly hired for private functions.

The Hall now need to replace the existing kitchen which is no longer fit for purpose, with a kitchen that meets the latest health and safety and hygiene regulations.

A new kitchen will address concerns voiced by hirers at the condition of the present facilities. This will lead to an increase in bookings, improved income and support for the long-term financial viability of the hall.

The total cost and installation of the kitchen is £17,090.72. The table below shows that the Hall Committee through extensive and ongoing fundraising, have already raised £8,590.72 and are looking to South Somerset District Council for a grant of £8,500.

Funding Source	Amount	Status
Parish /Town Council	£1,500	Confirmed
Own Funds	£2,000	Confirmed
Donations from groups	£2,175	Confirmed
Fundraising	£1,381	Confirmed
Donations from Individuals	£1,534.72	Confirmed
SSDC	£8,500	Pending
TOTAL	£17,090.72	

The Community Development Officer has assessed the application and the project has reached an overall score of 28, as outlined in the table below.

Category	Score	Maximum
Target Groups	6	7
Project	4	5
Capacity of Organisation	13	15
Financial need	4	7
Innovation	1	3
Total	28	37

The project meets the following corporate priorities.

- 3.11 Increased choice & quality of life for older people
- 3.18 Individuals and communities enjoying healthier and more active lifestyles
- 4.1 Deliver positive activities for children, young people (especially those at risk of exclusion or offending) and families.
- 4.22 Sustainable local community

The Community Development Officer recommends that the grant be awarded in full.

Crowshute House

Crowshute House is a Chard community centre, which hosts a wide variety of Societies and Clubs. Examples include the local theatre group, operatic society and Chard concert brass. There is a Sunday bingo club and provision of lunch clubs and services for older people.

Crowshute House was the subject of an asset transfer agreement in 2011, whereby control of the building was transferred from South Somerset District Council to Crowshute Centre Ltd a registered charitable company. Since July 2011 Crowshute Centre Ltd has managed and maintained the building, which is leased from South Somerset District Council.

The building now requires replacement of fire doors and windows, which have become rotten and unsafe. This project will install 3 fire doors and 5 double glazed windows, which will additionally improve the insulation of the building.

The total cost and installation of the doors and windows is £4,400. The table below shows that Crowshute Centre Ltd are in the process of raising 50% of these costs and are looking to South Somerset District Council for a grant of £2,200.

The applicant states that on this occasion the Town Council is unable to contribute, towards the project, as they have already allocated their grants budget for the year. However it should be noted that the Town Council did provide financial support to Crowshute House in 2010.

Funding Source	Amount	Status
Crowshute House Association	£2,200	Pending
SSDC	£2,200	Pending
TOTAL	£4,400	

The Community Development Officer has assessed the grant and the project has reached an overall score of 28, as outlined in the table below.

Category	Score	Maximum
Target Groups	6	7
Project	4	5
Capacity of Organisation	13	15
Financial need	4	7
Innovation	1	3
Total	28	37

This project meets the following corporate priorities:

- 3.11 Increased choice & quality of life for older people.
- 3.18 Individuals and communities enjoying healthier and more active lifestyles.
- 4.22 Sustainable local community.

The Community Development Officer recommends that the grant be awarded in full.

Hinton St George & Locality Rural Community Services Ltd (HRCS)

Hinton St George Locality Rural Community Services Ltd is an Industrial Provident Society for the Benefit of the Community (IPS) with 338 members. An IPS is the legal structure used by community shops, to allow them to trade as a social enterprise and use any surplus profit the business makes for the benefit of the community. The social enterprise was set up last year to save the local shop and post office from closure when the long standing owners put the business with accompanying residential property up for sale so they could retire.

Area West Committee awarded HRCS £12,500 in March 2011, which along with funds raised within the community and through other grants enabled them to purchase the

property at a cost of £290,000 in August 2011. Since that time HRCS has been running the business, which has been renamed 'Our Shop' as a community shop and Post Office with the support of a paid Manager and a dedicated group of volunteers.

The community shop is located within a five bedroom family house with a large garden and garage. Although "Our Shop" is trading successfully, most of the space in this property is not yet being used to its full potential, this includes the downstairs living quarters of the house (kitchen-diner and living room) and all of the first floor, which includes the five bedrooms and a bathroom.

To further ensure the long term sustainability of the community shop and Post Office HRCS would like to carry out the second phase of the project. This would involve making essential changes to the infrastructure of the building by completely separating the ground floor from the first floor. This would enable them to rearrange the space and create a more viable commercial community facility downstairs with separate residential space upstairs.

The building works would allow HRCS to expand the shop floor space into part of the downstairs rooms. The current first floor bedrooms will be turned into a 2 bedroom self contained flat, which would be let out for residential use. The rental income would be ploughed back into the social enterprise and used to benefit the community. Once the building works have been completed the shop floor will be refurbished and refitted to improve the layout allowing them to sell a wider range of products, which will improve sales and increase the viability of the project. The building works involve the following:

- Moving the staircase, which is currently in the centre of the property
- Creating fire and acoustic barriers between the commercial and residential parts of the property (as required by building regulations).
- Separating the electrics and water supplies for the two different parts of the building
- Installation of a ground floor WC and hand washing facility
- Shelving and refrigeration in the additional shop space

Altogether the total cost of these works is £61,178 with the funds being sought from the following sources:

Funding Source	Amount	Status
Parish Council	£1,000	Confirmed
Own funds	£14,178	Confirmed
Donations via the Somerset Community Foundation	£15,000	Confirmed
Big Lottery 'Village SOS'	£25,000	1 st stage is approved now waiting final decision Feb 2012
SSDC	£6,000	
Total	£61,178	

This is an innovative project and one that would ensure a community asset was being used to its maximum capacity and benefiting everyone in the locality.

Hinton St George has a very high proportion of residents over retirement age (37%) and 15% of households do not have private transport. The proposed bus cuts will affect the bus service to/from Hinton St. George making it harder for people to access services outside the village. The community shop and post office gives residents access to essential services within the village without the need for them to travel to a nearby town.

In addition to the building works outlined above HRCS is also in the process of turning the garden of the property into a community potager style garden which will supply the shop with home grown fruit, vegetables and flowers.

The Community Regeneration Officer has assessed this application and the project has received the following score:

Category	Score	Maximum
Target Groups	6	7
Project	5	5
Capacity of Organisation	15	15
Financial need	6	7
Innovation	3	3
	35	37

This project meets the following Corporate Priorities:

- 1.11 - A vibrant and sustainable rural economy by supporting a local community shop
- 3.0 - Increase choice of available housing by creating a flat above the shop
- 3.11 Increase choice and quality of life for older and vulnerable people by providing an accessible quality service providing goods that people need
- 3.18 Individuals enjoy healthier and more active lifestyles through volunteering
- 4.16 – an empowered community where people take part in shaping their neighbourhood through getting involved in a community enterprise.
- 4.22 A sustainable community – the shop has a local sourcing policy and plans to sell locally grown fruit, vegetables and flowers.

The Community Regeneration Officer recommends that the grant be awarded in full.

Hinton St George Village Hall & Playing Field Trust (HVHPF)

In response to feedback received from the recently completed Parish Plan the Village Hall and Playing Field Trust are working on projects to improve both facilities. This application is to consider a grant request for a new roundabout for the playing field.

The Parish Plan completed in 2009 highlighted that 14% of the population are under 18 years of age, since its completion that figure has increased as more families have moved into the area.

The playing field has not had any new equipment for several years and during consultation carried out for the Parish Plan, many people said they wanted to see improved facilities for the children and young people in the village.

The Playing Field Committee have consulted with children at the village school to find out what they would like and a zip wire and a roundabout came out as the two most popular choices. The Committee have decided to buy a roundabout because a wider age range of children will be able to use this piece of equipment. They have considered a number of different types of roundabout but have opted for a design that allows parents

to sit on it with babies and toddlers, together with children who are able to use it on their own. This particular type of roundabout has also been installed in a number of locations across the district recently.

In addition to the roundabout the Committee are also paying to have an existing rocking horse refurbished along with new safety matting fitted at the site of both the roundabout and the rocking horse.

Costs and Funding

The total cost of the project is £11,800

Item	Cost
Refurbishment of existing rocking horse	£1,860
Roundabout with safety matting plus fitting	£9,940
Total	£11,800

Approximately 60% of the cost of this project has been raised locally within the village as can be seen from the funding table below:

Funding Source	Amount	Status
Own funds	£3,000	Confirmed
Parish Council	£500	Confirmed
HSG Reading Room Trust	£1250	Confirmed
Punkie Night Committee	£250	Confirmed
Hinton Ladies Fundraisers	£2000	Confirmed
TOTAL	£7,000	
SSDC	£4,800	Pending

An improved playing field facility for Hinton St George will benefit the following priority groups which the District Council have identified as being important:

- Children and young people up to 18 years
- People facing social exclusion in rural areas

This project meets the following corporate priorities:

2.13 - reduce waste and recycling as they plan to refurbish the rocking horse rather than taking it out and buying a new one.

3.18 – individuals enjoying healthier and more active lifestyles by giving children the opportunity to play.

4.0 – a community that feels safe as the play facilities provide an environment that promotes family activity.

4.16 an empowered community where people can take part in shaping their neighbourhood as the improved play area provides an environment for new members of the community to integrate and make friends.

The Community Regeneration Officer has assessed the application and it has received the following score:

Category	Score	Maximum
Target Groups	2	7
Project	4	5
Capacity of Organisation	11	15
Financial need	5	7
Innovation	2	3
Total	24	37

The Community Regeneration Officer recommends that the grant be awarded in full.

Condition of Grant Funding

The Community Regeneration Officer recommends that a condition of grant funding should be that the Village Hall and Playing Field Committee puts in place an Equal Opportunities Policy.

Carbon Emissions & Adapting to Climate Change Implications (NI188)

- The double glazed windows at Crowshute House will improve insulation and reduce heat loss.
- Supporting Combe St Nicholas village Hall – will reduce local car journeys

Equality and Diversity Implications

Combe St Nicholas Village Hall - Access to services for rurally isolated.

Background Papers: *Community Grant Criteria*
(www.southsomerset.gov.uk/communities/funding-for-your-group-or-project)
Grant applications on File
AW Committee March 2011 Capital Grants