

Area West Committee – 18th April 2012

7. Area West - Community Grants (Executive Decision)

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Purpose of the Report

To consider applications for “tapering” revenue grants from eligible organisations in Area West for 2012/13.

Public Interest

Grant applications have been submitted by four community groups to help towards their running costs.

Recommendation

To approve grants for the following amounts:-

- (1) Chard Museum - £ 3,420
- (2) Chard Young People's Centre - £1,766
- (3) Crewkerne Heritage Centre - £1,409
- (4) West One Youth and Community Centre - £1,248

Background

The five local organisations listed in the summary table below have been in receipt of regular grants from the Area West Community Grants fund towards their running costs for a number of years.

In April 2009 Joint Area Committee West agreed that it was necessary to put a strategy in place that would ensure local community organisations did not come to rely on an annual grant from SSDC as a source of sustainable long term core funding.

In March 2010 Area West Committee agreed a strategy to reduce financial dependency in a fair and transparent way, allowing time for these organisations to develop other funding streams and increase income/reduce costs to enable their continued success.

The strategy is based on a phased reduction in the grant levels offered to these organisations, as shown below. The awarding of grants is still subject to an annual application and approval process, but the maximum amount available to each organisation reduces by 20% each year, using the 2009 awards as a baseline. All the listed organisations were made aware of the adopted strategy in March 2010.

Year	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Maximum Grant Award (£)	100%	80%	60%	40%	20%
Chard Museum	8,550	6,840	5,130	3,420	1,710
Chard Young Peoples Centre	4,415	3,532	2,649	1,766	883
Crewkerne Heritage Centre	3,523	2,818	2,114	1,409	705
West One Youth & Community Centre	3,121	2,497	1,873	1,248	624
Ile Youth Centre	3,395	2,716	2,037	1,358	679

Purpose of Grant Funding

The applications received this year are all from organisations that have had a Service Level Agreement with SSDC for the past three years, four of these organisations are requesting funding towards their day-to-day running costs. A request from the fifth, Ile Youth Club, will be brought to committee as soon as possible.

Assessment of Applications

Each application has been through an assessment process against criteria laid down in the SSDC grants policy. Schemes achieving a score lower than 22 would not be recommended for financial support. This year all schemes were assessed at 22 points or above.

Summary table of Grant Applications

Organisation	2011 Award	2012 Request	Purpose	Points scored	Recommended Grant
Chard Museum	5,130	3,420	Ongoing running costs	22	3,420
Chard Young People Centre	2,649	1,766	Ongoing running costs	24	1,766
Crewkerne Heritage Centre	2,114	1,409	Ongoing running costs	29	1,409
West One Youth & Community Centre	1,873	1,248	Ongoing running costs	28	1,248
Ile Youth Centre	2,037	N/a	Ongoing running costs	N/a	N/a
Totals	£18,403	£ 7,843			£ 7,843

Detail of Grant Applications

Chard Museum

Chard Museum has submitted an application for £3,420 to contribute towards the cost of premises rental.

Museum Running Costs **£20,000**

Income:	£
Town Council	1,000
Admissions	4,000
Donations:	4,580
Friends of the museum.	5,000
Gift Aid	2,000

Total Income **£16,580**

Amount requested from SSDC. **£3,420**

Additional Information

Chard and District Museum is a registered charity, which has existed in the local community since 1970. It occupies a building rented from South Somerset District Council

Following successful promotions over the preceding two years particularly through their 'Friends of the Museum' campaign, the museum have continued to advertise to attract visitors. However this year they have faced a noticeable decline in footfall and many Friends of the Museum have not renewed subscriptions.

The museum committee continue to make every effort to reduce overheads and seek new income streams. However they now believe that the gains made in the preceding two years may not be sustainable and are concerned for the long term financial viability of the museum.

The museum is open from April until October and last year welcomed 1,800 visitors, which was a drop from the previous year high of 2,049.

Council Plan Implications

Focus Four: Health and Communities – We want communities that are healthy, self-reliant and have individuals who are willing to help each other.

Chard Young People's Centre

Chard Young People's Centre has submitted an application for £ 1,766 to contribute towards their running costs.

Young People's Centre Running Costs **£25,286**

Income:	£	
Town Council	1,000	
Own Funds	22,333.75	
Charity Trust	52.25	
Healthy Living Centre	104.00	
Member of the public	30.00	
Total Income		£23,520

Amount requested from SSDC. **£1,766**

Additional Comments

Chard Young People's Centre is a registered charity, which has provided a valued local resource since the 1970's. It occupies a building rented from South Somerset District Council.

The aim of the Chard Young Peoples Centre is the provision of youth services for Chard and the surrounding area. The Centre is also a venue for a range of other community groups including a home education centre.

I was asked in May last year to undertake an exercise to resolve the Centre's outstanding questions over their lease, which had resulted in the lease remaining unsigned for a number of years. It was important to ensure that whilst grant funding for running costs is tapering down, SSDC would still be in a position to offer the Centre support.

The issues to be resolved have included demarcating the external boundaries of the building, resolving responsibility for maintenance and upkeep of the property and addressing the problem of the outdated and inadequate heating system.

Much progress has been made since last year. The external boundary lines have been confirmed and the Young Peoples Centre understand their responsibilities for care and maintenance of the property. SSDC have offered to provide a maintenance service for the property, although this will be at the Centre's cost. SSDC are also working to resolve the inadequate heating system.

A representative of the Centre has recently confirmed that all outstanding matters relating to their lease have been answered to their satisfaction and SSDC are now close to signing a new lease.

With the lease agreed and signed, the Centre intend to submit a grant application to replace a soft play area that has worn out.

This application is therefore one component in a broader series of initiatives to assist the Chard Young Peoples Centre proceed to a position of self financing by 2014.

Council Plan Implications

Focus Four: Health and Communities – We want communities that are healthy, self-reliant and have individuals who are willing to help each other.

Crewkerne Heritage Centre (AW/09/236)

The Heritage Centre has made an application for £1,409 towards running costs

Estimated Running Costs		£10,212
Income:	£	
Town Council	1,500	
Rents	600	
Other - fundraising	6,703	
Total Income		£8,803
Amount requested from SSDC.		£1,409

Additional Information

Crewkerne Heritage Centre is a very popular and highly regarded attraction within the town. The Heritage Centre houses a museum, local history room and a lettable meeting room. The trustees, supported by a dedicated group of volunteers, have worked hard to increase the profile of the Heritage Centre, raise funds and keep running costs to a minimum. Successes and achievements over the past 12 months include:

- Increasing the number of people visiting the museum
- Renegotiating contracts with energy, communication and insurance providers to reduce their running costs.
- Running a successful art exhibition throughout the building during November 2011, this helped raise further funds for the Heritage Centre.
- Increasing sales in the museum shop
- Increasing the number of volunteers that help run the service.
- Actively involved in the 'Promoting Crewkerne' project lead by SSDC.
- Essential repairs carried out to the stairwell wall.

The museum exhibitions planned for this year reflect events happening nationally. The 'Queen and Country' exhibition will use newspapers, magazines, memorabilia and fashion to detail life, culture and events that happened both locally and nationally throughout the past 60 years. The second exhibition during the summer months is titled 'Play the Game' and will show the importance of sporting activities in Crewkerne throughout the past century.

Council Plan Implications

Focus Four: Health and Communities – We want communities that are healthy, self-reliant and have individuals who are willing to help each other.

West One Youth & Community Centre

West One has made an application for £1,248 towards running costs

Estimated Running Costs		£22,875
Income:	£	
Town Council	10,250	
Estimated income from fees etc	6,500	
Own Funds	4,877	
Total Income		£21,627
Amount requested from SSDC.		£ 1,248

Additional Information

The West One Youth & Community Centre continues to provide a home to the after school club, the playgroup and a variety of youth sessions. Last year the Somerset County Council Youth Service reduced the number of youth sessions they could deliver in Crewkerne down to one per week, which is the senior club aimed at teenagers. In order to ensure that the younger teenagers and children in Crewkerne did not lose out the West One Trustees worked with Crewkerne Town Council to commission the services of a local Community Interest Company called Active Learning and Skills (AL&S). Active Learning and Skills have been running two sessions a week in Crewkerne; Wild Wednesdays and Fun Fridays, these are proving very popular with up to 30 children and young people attending each session.

Over the past year a major priority for the Trustees has been their involvement in progressing the project to build the George Reynolds Centre, a new community youth and sport facility at Henhayes. Early in March 2012 building work started on the George Reynolds Centre, which will provide a new home for all the users of West One Youth & Community Centre, as well as the main sports clubs in the town. It is envisaged that the users of West One will be able to move into their new home in Autumn 2012.

Council Plan Implications

Focus Four: Health and Communities – We want communities that are healthy, self-reliant and have individuals who are willing to help each other.

Ile Youth & Community Centre

A report will be brought to committee as soon as possible.

The Community Regeneration Officer is currently offering further advice to Ile Youth Club in relation to renewing their Service Level Agreement for 2012-13. Under the phased funding arrangement agreed in 2010 the Ile Youth and Community Centre are eligible to receive up to £1,358 towards their running costs.

Financial Implications

All of the recommended awards can be met from the existing Area West Community grant budget.

Carbon Emissions & Adapting to Climate Change Implications (NI188)

None.

Equality and Diversity Implications

In the opinion of the authors of this report, the projects for which grant aid is being requested are open and accessible and no-one is likely to receive less favourable treatment as a result of any decision made to award a grant.

Background Papers: *Grant application forms*
 Area West Committee June 2011 agenda and minutes
 Area West Committee March 2010 agenda and minutes