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# **Informal Discussion by Members of Area North Committee**

**Wednesday 15th December 2021**

**2.00 pm**

**A virtual consultative meeting via  
Zoom meeting software**

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The following members are requested to attend this virtual consultation meeting:

Neil Bloomfield  
Malcolm Cavill  
Louise Clarke  
Adam Dance

Mike Hewitson  
Tim Kerley  
Tiffany Osborne  
Clare Paul

Crispin Raikes  
Dean Ruddle  
Mike Stanton  
Gerard Tucker

There are no planning applications to consider this month.

Any members of the public wishing to address the virtual consultative meeting during Public Question Time, need to email [democracy@southsomerset.gov.uk](mailto:democracy@southsomerset.gov.uk) by 9.00am on Tuesday 14 December 2021.

The meeting will be streamed and viewable online at:

[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCSDst3IHGj9WoGnwJGF\\_soA](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCSDst3IHGj9WoGnwJGF_soA)

For further information on the items to be discussed, please contact:  
[democracy@southsomerset.gov.uk](mailto:democracy@southsomerset.gov.uk)

This Agenda was issued on Tuesday 7th December 2021

*Jane Portman, Chief Executive Officer*

**This information is also available on our website  
[www.southsomerset.gov.uk](http://www.southsomerset.gov.uk) and via the mod.gov app**

## **Information for the Public**

In light of the coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19), Area North Committee will meet virtually via video-conferencing to consider reports. As of 7 May 2021 some interim arrangements are in place for committee meetings.

At the meeting of Full Council on 15 April 2021 it was agreed to make the following changes to the Council's Constitution:

- a) To continue to enable members to hold remote, virtual meetings using available technology;
- b) To amend Part 3 (Responsibility for Functions) of the Council's Constitution to allow those remote meetings to function as consultative bodies and delegate decisions, including Executive and Quasi-Judicial decisions, that would have been taken by those meetings if the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 had continued in force to the Chief Executive (or the relevant Director in the Chief Executive's absence) in consultation with those meetings and those members to whom the decision would otherwise have been delegated under Part 3 of the Constitution;
- c) The delegated authority given under (b) will expire on 31 July 2021 unless continued by a future decision of this Council;

For full details and to view the report please see -

<https://modgov.southsomerset.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=137&MId=2981&Ver=4>

Further to the above, at the meeting of Full Council on 8 July 2021, it was agreed to extend the arrangements for a further 6 months to 8 January 2022.

For full details and to view the report please see -

<https://modgov.southsomerset.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=137&MId=3033&Ver=4>

## **Area North Committee**

Meetings of the Area North Committee are usually held monthly, at 2.00pm, on the fourth Wednesday of the month (unless advised otherwise. However during the coronavirus pandemic these meetings will be held remotely via Zoom.

Agendas and minutes of meetings are published on the council's website

<https://modgov.southsomerset.gov.uk/ieDocHome.aspx?bcr=1>

Agendas and minutes can also be viewed via the mod.gov app (free) available for iPads and Android devices. Search for 'mod.gov' in the app store for your device, install, and select 'South Somerset' from the list of publishers, then select the committees of interest. A wi-fi signal will be required for a very short time to download an agenda but once downloaded, documents will be viewable offline.

## **Public participation at meetings (held via Zoom)**

### **Public question time**

We recognise that these are challenging times but we still value the public's contribution to our virtual consultative meetings. If you would like to participate and contribute in the meeting,

please join on-line through Zoom at: <https://zoom.us/join> You will need an internet connection to do this.

Please email [democracy@southsomerset.gov.uk](mailto:democracy@southsomerset.gov.uk) for the details to join the meeting.

The period allowed for participation in Public Question Time shall not exceed 15 minutes except with the consent of the Chairman and members of the Committee. Each individual speaker shall be restricted to a total of three minutes.

If you would like to address the virtual consultative meeting during either Public Question Time or regarding a Planning Application, please email [democracy@southsomerset.gov.uk](mailto:democracy@southsomerset.gov.uk) by 9.00am on Tuesday 14 December. When you have registered, the Chairman will invite you to speak at the appropriate time during the virtual meeting.

#### **Virtual meeting etiquette:**

- Consider joining the meeting early to ensure your technology is working correctly.
- Please note that we will mute all public attendees to minimise background noise. If you have registered to speak during the virtual meeting, the Chairman will un-mute your microphone at the appropriate time.
- Each individual speaker shall be restricted to a total of three minutes.
- When speaking, keep your points clear and concise.
- Please speak clearly – the Councillors are interested in your comments.

#### **Planning applications**

***It is important that you register your request to speak at the virtual meeting by emailing [democracy@southsomerset.gov.uk](mailto:democracy@southsomerset.gov.uk) by 9.00am the day before the meeting. When you have registered, the Chairman will invite you to speak at the appropriate time during the virtual meeting.***

Consideration of planning applications at this meeting will commence no earlier than the time stated at the front of the agenda and on the planning applications schedule. The public and representatives of parish/town councils will be invited to speak on the individual planning applications at the time they are considered.

Comments should be confined to additional information or issues, which have not been fully covered in the officer's report. Members of the public are asked to submit any additional documents to the planning officer at least 72 hours in advance and not to present them to the Committee on the day of the meeting. This will give the planning officer the opportunity to respond appropriately. Information from the public should not be tabled at the meeting. It should also be noted that, in the interests of fairness, the use of presentational aids (e.g. PowerPoint) by the applicant/agent or those making representations will not be permitted. However, the applicant/agent or those making representations are able to ask the planning officer to include photographs/images within the officer's presentation subject to them being received by the officer at least 72 hours prior to the meeting. No more than 5 photographs/images either supporting or against the application to be submitted. The planning officer will also need to be satisfied that the photographs are appropriate in terms of planning grounds.

At the committee chairman's discretion, members of the public are permitted to speak for up to three minutes each and where there are a number of persons wishing to speak they should be encouraged to choose one spokesperson to speak either for the applicant or on behalf of any supporters or objectors to the application. The total period allowed for such participation on each application shall not normally exceed 15 minutes.

The order of speaking on planning items will be:

- Town or Parish Council Spokesperson
- Objectors
- Supporters
- Applicant and/or Agent
- District Council Ward Member

**If a member of the public wishes to speak at the virtual meeting they must email [democracy@southsomerset.gov.uk](mailto:democracy@southsomerset.gov.uk) by 9.00am on Tuesday 14 December.**

In exceptional circumstances, the Chairman of the Committee shall have discretion to vary the procedure set out to ensure fairness to all sides.

## **Recording and photography at council meetings**

Recording of council meetings is permitted, however anyone wishing to do so should let the Chairperson of the meeting know prior to the start of the meeting. The recording should be overt and clearly visible to anyone at the meeting, but non-disruptive. If someone is recording the meeting, the Chairman will make an announcement at the beginning of the meeting.

Any member of the public has the right not to be recorded. If anyone making public representation does not wish to be recorded they must let the Chairperson know.

The full 'Policy on Audio/Visual Recording and Photography at Council Meetings' can be viewed online at:

<http://modgov.southsomerset.gov.uk/documents/s3327/Policy%20on%20the%20recording%20of%20council%20meetings.pdf>

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# Informal Discussion by Members of Area North Committee

**Wednesday 15 December 2021**

## Agenda

### *Preliminary Items*

#### **1. Minutes**

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the previous meeting held on 22 September 2021. The draft minutes can be viewed at:

<https://modgov.southsomerset.gov.uk/ieDocHome.aspx?bcr=1>

#### **2. Apologies for Absence**

#### **3. Declarations of Interest**

In accordance with the Council's current Code of Conduct (as amended 26 February 2015), which includes all the provisions relating to Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPI), personal and prejudicial interests, Members are asked to declare any DPI and also any personal interests (and whether or not such personal interests are also "prejudicial") in relation to any matter on the Agenda for this meeting.

Members are reminded that they need to declare the fact that they are also a member of a County, Town or Parish Council as a Personal Interest. Where you are also a member of Somerset County Council and/or a Town or Parish Council within South Somerset you must declare a prejudicial interest in any business on the agenda where there is a financial benefit or gain or advantage to Somerset County Council and/or a Town or Parish Council which would be at the cost or to the financial disadvantage of South Somerset District Council.

#### **Planning Applications Referred to the Regulation Committee**

The following members of this Committee are also members of the Council's Regulation Committee:

Councillors Neil Bloomfield, Malcolm Cavill, Adam Dance and Crispin Raikes.

Where planning applications are referred by this Committee to the Regulation Committee for determination, Members of the Regulation Committee can participate and vote on these items at the Area Committee and at Regulation Committee. In these cases the Council's decision-making process is not complete until the application is determined by the Regulation Committee. Members of the Regulation Committee retain an open mind and will not finalise their position until the Regulation Committee. They will also consider the matter at Regulation Committee as Members of that Committee and not as representatives of the Area Committee.

#### **4. Date of next meeting**

Councillors are requested to note that the next Area North Committee meeting is scheduled to be held at 2.00pm on **Wednesday 26 January 2022**, with meeting arrangements to be confirmed.

5. **Public Question Time**

6. **Chairman's Announcements**

7. **Reports From Members**

*Items for Discussion*

8. **Community Grant to Muchelney Parochial Church Council (Executive Decision)**  
(Pages 7 - 14)

9. **Area North Forward Plan** (Pages 15 - 16)

10. **Planning Appeals (for information)** (Page 17)

**Please note that members of the Area Committee will make a recommendation on the above reports. The decision will be taken by the Chief Executive.**



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## **Community Grant to Muchelney Parochial Church Council (Executive Decision)**

Director: Kirsty Larkins, Director of Service Delivery  
Manager: Tim Cook, Locality Manager  
Lead Officer: Adrian Moore, Locality Officer  
Contact Details: adrian.moore@southsomerset.gov.uk or 01935 462462

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### **Purpose of the Report**

Councillors are asked to consider the awarding of a grant of £12,500 towards the 'Phase 1 Project': New All Ability Accessible Toilet at Muchelney Church.

### **Public Interest**

Awarding grants is a key way that SSDC supports and helps to deliver community projects sponsored by Parishes and voluntary community organisations in the towns and villages across the district.

Muchelney Parochial Church Council has applied to the Area North community grants programme for financial assistance with the costs of installation of 'Phase 1 Project': New All Ability Accessible Toilet. This is in readiness for the separately funded 'Phase 2 Project': New Kitchenette, Storage and Community Space within Muchelney Church.

The Locality Officer who is submitting this report to enable the Area North Committee to make an informed decision about the application has assessed the application.

### **Recommendation**

That Area North Committee recommend to the Chief Executive that a grant of £12,500 be awarded to Muchelney Parochial Church Council, the grant to be allocated from the Area North capital programme and subject to SSDC standard conditions for community grants (appendix A).

### **Application Details**

Name of applicant:	Muchelney Parochial Church Council
Project:	'Phase 1 Project': New All Ability Accessible Toilet at Muchelney Church.
Total project cost:	72,500
Amount requested from SSDC:	12,500
% amount requested	17.2%
Application assessed by:	Adrian Moore

## Community Grants Assessment Score

The table below shows the grant scoring for this application. Applications must meet the minimum score of 22 to be considered for SSDC funding under Community Grants policies.

Category	Max Score available	Officer assessment score
<b>A</b> Supports Council Plan/Area Chapter	1	<b>1</b>
<b>B</b> Supports Equalities & Diversity	1	<b>1</b>
<b>C</b> Supports Environment Strategy	3	<b>2</b>
<b>D</b> Need for Project	10	<b>8</b>
<b>E</b> Capacity of Organisation	15	<b>11</b>
<b>F</b> Financial need	7	<b>6</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>29</b>

## Background

Muchelney Church is the Parish Church of St Peter & St Paul in the beautiful little village of Muchelney. A 17th century writer described it as “a perfectly reasonable church.” This somewhat underwhelming description hides the fact that it is a Grade 1 listed gem, which, like many village churches, has been amended and adapted to contemporary needs down the centuries. It has two particularly notable features – a wonderful ceiling, full of brightly painted angels, and a church barrel organ which is still in working order. The Church St Peter & St Paul is situated between Muchelney Abbey (English Heritage) and The Priest's House (National Trust), and although the church was never part of the abbey, the Abbot was the patron.

Muchelney is a small and friendly village and is rightly proud of its church and looks after it with diligence. There are not many homes around the church but the village runs south from the church and also encompasses the hamlet of Muchelney Ham. There are a number of working farms in the parish and a celebrated Pottery.

More recently Muchelney became famous in the floods of 2014, when the parish was overwhelmed by extensive flooding and the village became an island for over 10 weeks! The centre of the village, though itself not flooded, was cut off from the 'outside world'. Children had to be boated in and out of the village to get to and from school, groceries and other provisions also had to be boated in. With the vicar arriving by boat, the Sunday services welcomed everyone and were often followed by popular 'Flood Lunches'. The church became a natural focal point for all the parish.

In that time, the church acted as post office, doctor's surgery, shop, information hub and an essential cafe for the crew operating the 'ferry boat' link to the mainland. It was used as the centre from which provisions were distributed. The emergency services staff came for relief at the end of long and cold shifts, and hot meals were served to them and villagers too. However, all the food had to be imported in insulated flasks,



as there was no kitchen, and the biggest drawback was the fact that there were no toilet facilities. Despite being surrounded by murky flood water, parishioners brought all that was needed into the ancient church building including clean drinking water. Hosting lunches in the church has continued since the floods, sometimes with a sizzling BBQs in the church porch and there have been several 'Pop-up Pubs-with-a-Question' on summer Friday evenings.

The terrible experience of the flooding actually inspired Muchelney to press on with plans to make the church a community centre for all the village. Many parochial church councils the length and breadth of England are looking to increase the value to the local community of the churches they care for. They still wish them to be places of worship, but recognise that, by careful adaptation of the space within and around them, they can become wider community centres for all the residents of their parish.

It has long been the intention of Muchelney Parochial Church Council to improve the basic facilities of the church and in January 2020 full permission for an external, fully accessible All Ability Toilet was granted by the Church of England. Planning permission has also been granted by South Somerset District Council. This is the first phase in bringing a new life to this old and beautiful building. Further development of the church, which will be separately funded, will include a kitchenette, related storage and the removal of a number of pews to make room for social events and activities providing an essential new community space for the village which has no village hall, school or pub.

In the foreword to the English Heritage 2013 publication, *Constructive Conservation: sustainable growth for historic places*, the then chair, Baroness Andrews, noted that "Historic buildings and places help to define our nation. Even so, change, adaptation or development will often be the key to securing their future."

## Parish information

Parish*	Muchelney
Parish Population	200
No. of dwellings	78

\*Taken from the 2011 census profile

## The project

'Phase 1 Project' - Installation of an external, fully accessible All Ability Toilet constructed just outside the church, adjacent to the north porch.

As the church currently has no plumbing or drainage at all, this 'Phase 1 Project' will also include extensive plumbing and drainage requirements in preparation for the anticipated and separately funded 'Phase 2 Project': New Kitchenette, Storage and Community Space within the church.

## Local support / evidence of need

There has always been a need for a toilet in Muchelney church. However, it was identified that in order for the community to begin to be able to use the church effectively for new activities, it was essential to build the new All Ability Accessible Toilet first. Once it is installed and the community use of the church increases it will enable further fundraising activities to take place to support the 'Phase 2 Project' of the increased community space which will include the new kitchenette and associated storage space.

The All Ability Toilet will be a brand new facility and therefore, maintenance costs should be minimal. The key point is that the Church Council will be able to operate their community activities much more easily, such as Big Breakfasts, BBQs, Pop-up Pubs and afternoon tea sessions and income generated will help go towards future maintenance costs.

The new toilet will be a free standing building outside the church and can therefore be open for use at all times. The whole population of the parish of Muchelney will benefit, as well as other South Somerset residents and visitors. The church lies on popular tourist routes including cycling and walking routes and consequently the new facilities will be used and welcomed by all.

The development of this project has been far from straightforward for the Church Council. However, through the lengthy process of securing the two approvals needed for the fully accessible All Ability Toilet which included permission within the Church of England and also planning permission from South Somerset District Council, many expressions of support were offered. Other supportive comments have been received when the Church Council briefed all residents of the parish about their intentions to adapt and use their church for this wider community good.

The operation of the church is well known throughout the parish. The website "A church near you" is always kept up to date. Events that are happening are advertised through a village email list and on local notice boards.

## Project costs

<b>Project costs</b>	<b>Cost £</b>
Excavations, building materials & construction, sewage and plumbing installation (to include provision for second phase kitchenette), toilet, furnishings and decorating (incl. VAT)	60,804
Archaeologist's fees (incl. VAT)	2,096
Architect's fees (incl. VAT)	9,600
<b>Total</b>	<b>72,500</b>

## Funding plan

Funding source	Secured or Pending	Amount £
Parish Council	Muchelney has no parish council; there is only a parish meeting	-
Awards for All (Lottery)	Secured	5,000
Somerset Community Foundation	Secured	10,600
Church Walking Pilgrimages	Secured	5,000
Clark Foundation	Secured	7,500
Somerset Churches Trust	Secured	3,000
South Somerset District Council	Pending	12,500
Prince's Countryside Fund	Pending	10,000
Laing Family Trust	Pending	5,000
Garfield Western Foundation	Pending	7,500
Medlock Charitable Trust	Pending	6,400
<b>Total</b>		<b>72,500</b>

## Conclusion and Recommendation

It is recommended that a grant of £12,500 is awarded

## Financial implications

The balance in the Area North Capital programme is £ £50,888. If the recommended grant of £12,500 is awarded, £38,388 will remain.

Grants are awarded subject to all other funding being secured before the commencement of the project and are on a % basis of the full project costs. Payment of the grant cannot exceed the grant award and is proportionally reduced if full project costs are under budget.

## Council Plan Implications

### Council Plan themes and Areas of focus for 2021/22

#### **Focus 3 – Environment**

To keep South Somerset clean, green and attractive and respond to the climate and ecological emergency, we will work in partnership to:

- Continue the delivery of the Environment Strategy action plan, reducing our carbon emissions by 10% every year, to reach carbon neutrality by 2030
- Adopt and commence delivery of an Open Spaces Strategy promoting green infrastructure across the district
- Enhance the quality of the environment and its resilience and ability to adapt to climate change in partnership with our communities and businesses
- To protect South Somerset's landscape to seek to increase tree cover within our communities and the wider environment
- Support the delivery of the County wide Climate Change Emergency Strategy



- Initiate and support actions and infrastructure to encourage a shift to low carbon transport options including walking, cycling and electric mobility
- Promote and improve recycling and minimise waste through the roll out of 'Recycle More' across South Somerset from June 2021 through the Somerset Waste Partnership
- Support the development of environmental and ecological aspects within local, parish and neighbourhood plans
- Promote Nature Recovery Networks across the district, with a focus on delivery via the Ham Hill project
- Work with external partners to benefit the wider national cause in developing and generating clean energy storage to reduce renewable energy wastage in turn reducing use of fossil fuels in UK energy production.

### ***Focus 5 – Healthy, Self-reliant Communities***

To enable healthy communities which are cohesive, sustainable and enjoy a high quality of life, we will:

- Embed social value into all processes and activities to ensure we maximise the support we give to our communities
- Work with partners to keep and help our residents feel safe in their homes and communities
- Work with partners to reduce the impact of social isolation and create a feeling of community
- Work with partners to support people improving their physical and mental health and wellbeing
- Enable quality cultural, leisure and sport activities
- Proactively support residents facing hardship
- Help tackle the causes of economic and social exclusion, poverty and low social mobility
- Support older people to live and age well by increasing their independence, reducing loneliness, and improving financial security.

### **Area Chapter Implications for 2021/22**

#### **Healthy, Self-reliant Communities**

- Support a range of improvements to community facilities through S106 and Community grants

### **Carbon Emissions and Climate Change Implications**

Reduced travel/car use.

### **Equality and Diversity Implications**

The project aims to provide for people across all age and interest groups in the local community.

### **Background Papers**

None.

## Appendix A

### Standard conditions applying to all SSDC Community Grants

#### The applicant agrees to: -

- Notify SSDC if there is a material change to the information provided in the application.
- Start the project within six months of the grant offer and notify SSDC of any changes to the project or start date as soon as possible.
- Confirm that all other funding sources have been secured before starting the project, if these were not already in place at the time of the application.
- Acknowledge SSDC assistance towards the project in any relevant publicity about the project (e.g. leaflets, posters, websites, and promotional materials) and on any permanent acknowledgement (e.g. plaques, signs etc.).
- Work in conjunction with SSDC officers to monitor and share the success of the project and the benefits to the community resulting from SSDC's contribution to the project.
- Provide a project update and/or supply before and after photos if requested
- Supply receipted invoices or receipts which provide evidence of the **full** cost of the project so that the grant can be released.
- Complete an evaluation survey when requested after the completion of the project.
- Note that they cannot apply for another community grant for the same project within a 3-year period of this award.

#### Standard conditions applying to buildings, facilities and equipment

- Establish and maintain a “sinking fund” to support future replacement of the building / facility / equipment as grant funding is only awarded on a one-off basis.
- Use the SSDC Building Control Service when buildings regulations are required.
- Incorporate disabled access and provide an access statement where relevant.

#### Special conditions

None



## Area North Committee - Forward Plan

Director: Nicola Hix, Strategy & Support Services  
Officer: Becky Sanders, Case Officer (Strategy & Support Services)  
Contact Details: democracy@southsomerset.gov.uk

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## Purpose of the Report

This report informs Members of the Area North Committee Forward Plan.

## Public Interest

The forward plan sets out items and issues to be discussed over the coming few months. It is reviewed and updated each month, and included within the Area North Committee agenda, where members of the committee may endorse or request amendments.

## Recommendation

Members are asked to note and comment upon the Area North Committee Forward Plan as attached, and to identify priorities for any further reports.

## Area North Committee Forward Plan

Members of the public, councillors, service managers, and partners may also request an item be placed within the forward plan for a future meeting, by contacting the Agenda Co-ordinator.

Items marked *in italics* are not yet confirmed, due to the attendance of additional representatives.

To make the best use of the committee, the focus for topics should be on issues where local involvement and influence may be beneficial, and where local priorities and issues raised by the community are linked to SSDC and SCC corporate aims and objectives.

Further details on these items, or to suggest / request an agenda item for the Area North Committee, please contact one of the officers named above.

**Background Papers:** None

### Area North Committee Forward Plan

Further details on these items, or to suggest / request an agenda item for the Area North Committee, please contact the Agenda Co-ordinator; at [democracy@southsomerset.gov.uk](mailto:democracy@southsomerset.gov.uk)

Items marked in italics are not yet confirmed.

<b>Meeting Date</b>	<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>Background / Purpose</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>
TBC	Community Grants	To consider any requests for funding.	Locality Officer



## Planning Appeals

Strategic Director: Kirsty Larkins, Service Delivery  
Lead Specialist: John Hammond, Principal Planner  
Contact Details: john.hammond@southsomerset.gov.uk

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## Purpose of the Report

To inform members of the appeals that have been lodged, decided upon or withdrawn.

## Public Interest

The Area Chairmen have asked that a monthly report relating to the number of appeals received, decided upon or withdrawn be submitted to the Committee.

## Recommendation

That members note the report.

## Appeals Received

None.

## Appeals Dismissed

None

## Appeals Allowed

None

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