

## **Community Grant to Kirkham Street Field Community Trust (Executive Decision)**

*Interim Director:* Kirsty Larkins, Director of Service Delivery  
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### **Purpose of the Report**

Councillors are asked to consider the awarding of a grant of £12,500 towards the purchase of part of Kirkham Street Field, Somerton.

### **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.

Kirkham Street Field Community Trust has applied to the Area North Community Grants Programme for financial assistance with the purchase of part of Kirkham Street Field, Somerton. The application has been assessed by the Locality Officer who is submitting this report to enable the Area North Committee to make an informed decision about the application.

### **Recommendation**

It is recommended that Councillors award a grant of £12,500 to Kirkham Street Field Community Trust, the grant to be allocated from the Area North Community Grants Programme and subject to SSDC standard conditions for community grants (Appendix A)

### **Application Details**

Name of applicant:	Kirkham Street Field Community Trust
Project:	Purchase of part of Kirkham Street Field, Somerton
Total project cost:	£ 185,000
Amount requested from SSDC:	£ 12,500
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		Comments
<b>A</b> Supports Council Plan/Area Chapter	1	<b>Yes</b>
<b>B</b> Supports Equalities & Diversity	1	<b>Yes</b>
<b>C</b> Supports Environment Strategy	3	
<b>D</b> Need for Project	7	
<b>E</b> Capacity of Organisation	13	
<b>F</b> Financial need	7	
<b>Total</b>	<b>32</b>	

## Background

Kirkham Street Field, Somerton has been designated an Asset of Community Value. Kirkham Street Field Community Trust, which is a newly formed charitable incorporated organisation, has established with Somerset County Council, who are the owners, that it can purchase the field. The purchase of the whole field can take place once the field is declared redundant from its current use as a school playing field for £750,000 if the funds are available in 2021.



The County Council have agreed however, that Kirkham Street Field Community Trust can purchase part of the site for £185,000 if the Trust cannot achieve the full £750,000 target. They also agreed that in the early months of 2021, whilst the necessary seeking of planning consent for change of use to community park on the field was being pursued, any further funds raised could go towards purchasing a larger proportion of the field.

The community park is needed in Somerton as there is a current deficit of informal open space identified by South Somerset District Council in its Infrastructure Delivery Plan Update document 2016.

The overall responsibility for the project rests with the seven Trustees. It is the intention of the Trust to establish a 'Friends of Kirkham Street Field Volunteer Group'. Initially, 80 people indicated they would wish to support the Trust when it consulted the public in 2019. The Trust is in the process of contacting these people again with a view to formally setting up a volunteer group. The Trust is also actively

seeking partnership with a number of local bodies including Dementia Awareness, RSPB, Somerset Wildlife and others. The Trust is also actively seeking additional trustees.

## Parish information

Parish	Somerton
Parish population	Approximately 4,900

## The Project

The current project is to purchase part of Kirkham Street Field in Somerton, once it is declared redundant from its current use as a school playing field, and to establish it as a community park.

The aim of the project is to preserve Kirkham Street Field as an amenity green space located within the town, including its environmental benefits; in order to provide facilities for informal recreation and other leisure-time occupation in the interests of social welfare with the objective of improving the conditions of life for the community of Somerton.

## Local support / evidence of need

In April 2019 the Trust undertook a major public consultation that revealed overwhelming support for the idea of a community park (500 positive responses out of 550 responses received after a leafletting of all households in Somerton - approximately 2,300). A high response rate for such surveys and a very high response in favour of a community park.

The current Somerton Community Plan 2018/23 identified the public interest in the need for a park area/community garden/quiet green space for the central/eastern areas of the town.

Potential designs for the park were prepared with expert input and in context of the output of public consultation. Broad support for these designs were expressed at a public event. £110,000 of funds (including promises) secured including £25,000 commitment from Somerton Town Council. Potential agreement established with the landowner of Kirkham Street Field, (Somerset County Council), to purchase part of field if the target sum of £750,000 could not be raised. A Website has been established to provide profile and to promote donations of funds.

Based on the Consultation the Charity considers the Community benefit of its objective to be:

- Promotion of residents' physical and mental well-being and health
- Provision of informal quiet recreation and leisure facilities for all abilities currently lacking in Somerton
- The creation and maintenance of varied habitats to help wildlife and support biodiversity
- To help to meet the challenges of climate change
- A meeting place for all generations creating the opportunity for inter-generational community gardening
- A facility to promote the arts
- A venue for town events
- A facility through which educational experiences can be promoted
- A facility through which community volunteering can be encouraged

This project is promoted through the group's Facebook pages and website. Regular bulletins in the monthly town council magazine, press releases in local press and leaflet circulars to every household in town (on three occasions).

## Project costs

<b>Project costs</b>	<b>Cost £</b>
Purchase of part of Kirkham Street Field	185,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>185,000</b>

The Trust is actively considering possible purchase of approximately a third of the field at the moment, as this is deemed affordable within the time constraints and as being enough initially to provide the key elements of a community park. To-date, the Trust has raised approximately £120,000 in cash, promises and gift aid. In addition, they are hopeful for a successful outcome for their application through Somerton Town Council for a grant of £65,000 from the County Council Climate Change Emergency Community Fund. Potentially they will have raised £185,000.

Other donors and grant providers have and are being approached, including Clark's Foundation who have indicated they are willing to consider an application once the Trust are nearer the target. It is possible that some members of the community may make larger donations once the gap between funds raised and the target of £185,000 is perceived as being manageable. A Community Grant from SSDC will further help in closing the gap and encourage other donations.

The Trust is not ruling out the possibility of raising the full £750,000 and indeed has recently received a promise of £100,000 conditional on raising sufficient other funds to purchase the whole field. However, at present the possibility of raising a further £565,000 does not seem high given the relatively short time remaining before the County Council is likely to put the field up for sale.

After part of the field is purchased, maintenance funding support will initially come through a Somerton Town Council grant and through volunteer effort. The Town Council is aware of the intention to ask for an initial maintenance grant support if and when the field is acquired. The grant support is sought to provide time for the Trust to establish its own robust income stream through grants, sponsorships, donations and an events programme.

## Funding plan

<b>Funding source</b>	<b>Secured or pending</b>	<b>Amount £</b>
Town Council	Secured	25,000
Own Funds	Secured	30,000
Promises	Pending	55,000
Gift Aid on Personal Donations (Estimated)	Pending	up to 10,000
Somerset County Council Climate Change Emergency Community Fund	Pending	65,000
SSDC Community Grant	Pending	12,500
<b>Total</b>		<b>£ 185,000</b>

## Conclusion and Recommendation

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

## Special Conditions

If the land to be purchased by the Kirkham Field Trust is later resold, the £12,500 grant will be repayable to SSDC in full.

## Financial implications

If the previous two grants (South Petherton Arts and South Petherton Bowls Club) considered in this agenda are approved, then the balance in the Area North Capital programme will be £97,633.

If the recommended grant of £12,500 is awarded to Kirkham Street Field Community Trust, then £85,133 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

### **Focus 3: Environment**

To keep South Somerset clean, green and attractive we will work in partnership to:

- Promote recycling and minimise waste
- Promote the use of 'green' technology
- ***Maintain and promote access to our Country Parks and open spaces to promote good mental and physical health***
- Keep streets and neighbourhoods clean and attractive
- ***Continue to support long term flood resilience***
- Promote a high quality built environment in line with Local Plan policies
- ***Support communities to develop and implement local, parish and neighbourhood plans***

### **Focus 5: Health and Communities**

To build healthy, self-reliant, active communities we will:

- ***Support communities so that they can identify their needs and develop local solutions***
- ***Target support to areas of need***
- ***Help people to live well by enabling quality cultural, leisure, play, sport & healthy lifestyle facilities & activities***
- ***Work with partners to tackle health issues such as diabetes and hypertension and mental health***
- ***Work with our partners to keep our communities safe***

**Key priorities for Area North - Area Chapter:** Healthy, Self-reliant Communities

## 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.

#### **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**

- If the land to be purchased by the Kirkham Field Trust is later resold, the £12,500 grant will be repayable to SSDC in full.
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