

## **Community Grant to Rama Life CIC Community Minibus - Get Petherton Moving! (Executive Decision)**

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### **Purpose of the Report**

Councillors are asked to consider the awarding of a grant of £12,500 capital grant and revenue grant towards the purchase of a Community Minibus to assistance in providing Community Transport.

### **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.

Rama Life Community Interest Company (CIC) has applied to the Area North Community Grants Programme for financial assistance with the purchase of a Community Minibus. 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 Rama Life CIC, the grant to be allocated from the Area North Community Grants Programme towards the provision of a fully accessible, affordable Community Minibus for community transport, subject to SSDC standard conditions for community grants (Appendix A)

### **Application Details**

Name of applicant:	Rama Life CIC
Project:	Community Minibus - Get Petherton Moving!
Total project cost:	£ 26,500
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	1	
<b>D</b> Need for Project	7	
<b>E</b> Capacity of Organisation	12	
<b>F</b> Financial need	5	
<b>Total</b>	<b>27</b>	

## Background

Rama Life is a new venture in South Petherton who work with people of all ages, providing opportunities to learn, build skills and confidence and offering activities and discussion groups for young people outside of school. Their Ofsted registered holiday clubs provide childcare in a positive, fun and educational environment.

The objectives of the Company are to carry out activities which benefit the community and in particular to providing educational activities for young people and adults with the aim of building skills and improving self-confidence and self-esteem.

During their community work, Rama Life have identified the need for a fully accessible, Community Minibus to provide accessible, affordable transport which meets the needs of people in and around the South Petherton area. Residents who will utilise the affordable Community Minibus transport include Care Homes, Schools, Youth Clubs, Scouting, Guiding, Community Groups, Church Groups, Sporting Groups and more. Rama Life also hope to provide a scheme enabling isolated residents to be collected and taken to coffee mornings, social events, doctor's appointments, council meetings, etc.

Rama Life are excited to begin a Community Transport Project focusing on getting affordable transport to not-for-profit groups and organisations. The aims and objectives of the project are:

1. To provide the residents of South Petherton and the surrounding area with affordable community transport that will enable not-for-profit groups and organisations to travel for recreational purposes.
2. To help combat isolation by transporting people with limited mobility or who cannot access transport otherwise to be able to attend recreational activities.
3. To support the elderly or those with limited mobility to be able to access essential services.

## Parish information

Parish	South Petherton
Parish population	Approximately 4,500
No. of dwellings	825

## The Project

To purchase an affordable Community Minibus. The Minibus will be a lightweight 17 seater, with a disability ramp to aid wheelchairs users. It will have driver safety features such as parking sensors and hands-free connectivity.

The Community Minibus will be purchased by and run through Rama Life CIC as a not for profit enterprise. It will be based in South Petherton but will be available for hire by residents throughout Area North and when available across the District.

The Community Minibus will be able to be driven by those with a full driving licence, over the age of 21, who have been driving for at least five years. They will not require any additional driving categories, however, as per the hiring policy, drivers must have current experience of driving large vehicles or further training must be undertaken prior to hiring. This means the Community Minibus will have maximum accessibility as it will be fairly straightforward and low cost for groups to find an appropriate driver.

## Local support / evidence of need

Rama Life have had confirmation from local Scouts, Care Homes, Brownies, Youth Clubs and Schools that these organisations would utilise a local affordable Community Minibus. This facility would enable them to increase arranged trips for their membership and would make it more affordable.

Rama Life have already made contact with many groups but will be visiting and emailing groups again once the Community Minibus has been purchased. There will be a website with all the details on and a dedicated email address and phone number for bookings. Residents will be able to find out about the Community Minibus via the website, Facebook page, local adverts in parish magazines, emails to schools and local flyers.

The recommendation to support a capital grant towards the purchase of a Community Minibus is made with the understanding that there is a wider piece of work being undertaken by SSDC regarding Community Transport as one of the Council Plan Priority Projects.

*Council Plan 2019/20 – Priority Project 6 - “To assess options for improving community transport links”*

## Project costs

<b>Project costs</b>	<b>Cost £</b>
Minibus Purchase	23,500
Road Tax	270
Motor Insurance	2,000
Deep Clean	130
Sign Writing	600
<b>Total</b>	<b>26,500</b>

## Funding plan

<b>Funding source</b>	<b>Secured or pending</b>	<b>Amount £</b>
South Petherton Parish Council	Secured	2,000
Parsonage Solar Farm	Secured	5,000
Reach	Secured	500
Go Fund Me	Secured	240
Rama Life Donation	Secured	260
South Petherton Enhancement Fund	Secured	3,000
Yarlington/Abri Homes	Secured	3,000
SSDC Community Grant	Pending	12,500
<b>Total</b>		<b>£ 26,500</b>

Rama Life plan to use funds from the Community Minibus hire to cover the regular service inspections, road tax, MOT and mechanical work needed with assistance from South Petherton Parish Council who have committed to supporting the project on an ongoing basis. Any funds needed beyond this to assist with the potential replacement of the minibus in the future will be done through traditional fund raising routes and by reaching out to the main organisations who hire it the most to include them in the fundraising.

Rama Life have full confidence in the success of this project. However, like a charity, Rama Life CIC have an 'asset lock', this means that if the business were to close at any point, all funds and assets would remain within the community by going, in this case, to South Petherton Scout Group.

## **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 £145,125. If the recommended grant of £12,500 is awarded, £11,000 will come out of the Capital Programme and £134,125 will remain. £1,500 will come from the Area North community grant (Revenue) programme. The balance is currently £10,680 and therefore £9,180 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 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

## **Carbon Emissions & Adapting to Climate Change Implications**

Providing local access to a range of activities and services reducing the need to use multiple private cars to travel which therefore reduces carbon emissions.

## **Equality and Diversity Implications**

Project helps enhance accessibility for all.

**Key priorities for Area North - Area Chapter:**

Healthy, Self-reliant Communities.

**Background Papers**

None.

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## **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**

- None