

## Community Grant to Hinton St George Pre-School Appeal (Executive Decision)

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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 a new Pre-School building at Hinton St George.

### 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.

Hinton St George Pre-School Appeal has applied to the Area West Community Grants Programme for financial assistance with the purchase of a new Pre-School building. The application has been assessed by the Locality Officer who is submitting this report to enable the Area West Committee to make an informed decision about the application.

### Recommendation

That Area West Committee Members recommend that the Chief Executive award a grant of £12,500 to Hinton St George Pre-School Appeal, the grant to be allocated from the Area West Capital Programme and subject to SSDC standard conditions for community grants (Appendix A)

### Application Details

Name of applicant:	Hinton St George Pre-School Appeal
Project:	Purchase of a new Pre-School building
Total project cost:	£ 78,850
Amount requested from SSDC:	£ 12,500
% amount requested	15.85%
Application assessed by:	Adrian Moore



## South Somerset District Council 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	1
<b>B</b> Supports Equalities & Diversity	1	1
<b>C</b> Supports Environment Strategy	3	2
<b>D</b> Need for Project	10	4
<b>E</b> Capacity of Organisation	15	14
<b>F</b> Financial need	7	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>27</b>

### Background

Hinton St George Church of England Primary School (a Voluntary Controlled School) has been offering education to children in the local area since 1850. It is a dynamic, progressive, Primary School and Pre-School, rated as 'Good' by Ofsted in 2018. It is located in the village of Hinton St George and serves families in the local area beyond the formal catchment area of Hinton St George, Dinington and Lopen.

Following requests from parents and in anticipation of probable changes to the structure of education in the local Crewkerne and Ilminster area, the Governors took the decision to change the age range in the school so that the school ceased to be a First School and became a Primary School at the beginning of September 2020, it now serves children aged 4yrs – 11yrs. There is also a Pre-School within the existing school building providing for children aged 2yrs – 4yrs. This restructure now offers children a seamless education of high quality education from their earliest years and throughout their primary phase.

Presently there are 54 pupils on roll within the Primary School, although numbers are expected to increase to 67 from September 2021 due to the extension of the age range, a new development of 10 houses in the village which is nearing completion and the general increase in housing provision in the area. The Pre-School similarly draws children from quite a wide local area and, in its present accommodation, can cater for up to 12 children in each session.

St George's Pre-School has been popular and running successfully for over 30 years, originally as a charity and since 2019 as part of the school although it is not funded by the Local Authority. Unlike compulsory education, provision of pre-school education is not the statutory responsibility of the Local Authority, even though it is recognised as being vital to young children's development.

Currently, the Pre-School is housed on the first floor within the main Primary School building. The size of the accommodation constrains the number of children who can



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benefit and the stairs provide a barrier to some children with disabilities. There is also no direct access to outside space which is so important to the development of young children.

The aim is to relocate the Pre-School to a more appropriate setting in its own self-contained building on the school field, some 100m from the main Primary School building. The new building will enable greater numbers of Pre-School children to be accommodated, including children with mobility challenges. All the children will fully benefit from the rich outdoor environment that will surround them. As the Pre-School is not funded by the Local Authority it must therefore raise the capital funds for the new building itself.

The Primary School and Pre-School recognise the importance of education in the outdoors which encourages curiosity, allows for risk-taking in a safe environment and develops independence. The school are fortunate to have a large school field which, in addition to facilities for sports and play, offers a rich environment for learning and which is well used for Forest School by the Primary School and on a daily basis by the Pre-School. The school field is owned by Somerset County Council and the Primary School and Pre-School are permitted to use it for any educational purpose.

### Parish information

Parish	Hinton St George
Parish population	Approximately 450

### The Project

The new pre-school building will be constructed of two used shipping containers, clad and fully fitted to the Pre-School's specification. Fit-out will include toilets (including disabled toilet provision), kitchenette, infra-red heating, appropriate flooring and bi-fold doors opening onto a decking area with ramp to allow open all-ability access.

This type of building will provide an affordable long-term solution, minimal environmental impact and pleasing aesthetics. This solution also offers the opportunity for internal specification to the requirements of the professionals leading the Pre-School.

The new building can be installed and fully functional with a short lead time and will be fully fitted on completion. Existing furniture and equipment can simply be transferred from the present accommodation to the new building.

The building is allowed under 'Permitted Development Rights' and no planning application is required subject to restrictions on height, proximity to boundaries and colour of the cladding to meet requirements of the conservation area in which it will sit.

Hinton St George Pre-School Appeal are confident that, with the support of South Somerset District Council, they will be able to deliver the new Pre-School building in time for the beginning of the next academic year - September 2021.

Once the project is complete and the new building is in place, the Pre-School will be run under the umbrella of the Primary School by the same successful team of professionals as currently in place.

Having the Pre-School on the same site as the Primary School means there is a natural progression within a familiar setting for the children as they grow. The more children that can be educated close to their homes the better it is for the them, their community and the environment.

### **Local support / evidence of need**

The Pre-School have canvassed neighbours to whom the building will be visible and gained their support to proceed.

The new toilet facilities (including disabled facilities) that will be available in the new Pre-School building on the school field will remove the need for staff to accompany children back to the Primary School building, some 100m away to make use of toilet facilities. This will therefore make teaching, sports and fun events on the school field much more effective and enjoyable.

The existence of the new disabled toilet facilities will enable open access to all for any events held on the school field when they are open to the public.

The local community is behind the project. There have been a large number of personal donations, three local companies have pledged support and fundraising efforts continue.

Some 82% of the funds that have been secured to date arise from the local community. This demonstrates that many local people feel that the whole community will benefit from an enlarged and improved Pre-School facility. The knock-on effect of providing a new Pre-School building is significant in attracting young people to the local area and this is vital to a healthy community. The beneficiaries of the project will not only be the children of the Pre-School, their families and carers, now and for many years to come, but the entire local community.

The Pre-School building will be available for other young children's groups to be used out of school hours, subject to suitability, appropriate safeguarding, insurance arrangements etc.

The widespread support from local residents and organisations not directly benefitting from the services of the Primary School or Pre-School is testament to the importance of the project to the community as a whole.

Letter of support from:  
Assistant Director Education, Partnerships and Skills  
Somerset County Council

*“I can confirm that, while the pre-school is managed by Hinton St George C of E Primary School, it is school designated 4 years not from 2 years. The provision is not a Local Authority maintained nursery but is operated under section 27 of the Childcare Act, under Community Governance. These powers allow schools to provide any charitable purpose (such as early education) for the benefit of families of pupils at the school, or families who live or work in the locality of the school. The children attending this provision are not registered as pupils.*

*The pre-school is separately funded and is self-financing. Income to the pre-school is from the Early Years Entitlement (which parents claim) fees paid by parents and any fundraising the school carry out.*

*Somerset County Council does not receive central government capital funding for Early Years and therefore any capital funding held by the Local Authority has to be prioritised to meet our statutory requirements of ensuring sufficiency of Early Years places across the County. As we have sufficiency of places in the area we would not be able to financially support this project at this point in time, however would absolutely support the school in what they are trying to achieve. It would be our sincere hope that any application to any other body, such as the District Council, would be looked on favourably.”*

## Project costs

<b>Project costs</b>	<b>Cost £</b>
Provision and installation of fully fitted and clad building, including an area of decking and groundworks for trenching to road for mains water and sewerage.	76,850
Final connection to water supply and sewerage	2,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>£ 78,850</b>

## Funding plan

<b>Funding source</b>	<b>Secured or pending</b>	<b>Amount £</b>
Hinton St George Parish Council	Secured	7,500
Lopen Parish Council	Secured	250
Pre-School Reserves	Secured	8,000
Hinton St George Parochial Church Council	Secured	5,000
Lopen Parochial Church Council	Secured	1,000
Donations from local individuals	Secured	6,100
Donations from 3 local companies	Secured	3,000
Donations from local individuals and companies - ongoing	Pending	500

Gift Aid claims	Secured	1,400
Gift Aid claims	Pending	500
Local fundraising activities	Secured	5,700
Local fundraising activities: 'Hinton's Big Day Out' – 3 <sup>rd</sup> July 2021	Pending	1,400
Grant from local source: The Reading Room Trust	Secured	10,000
Grants from Regional Charitable Trusts: Anonymous Foundation, Norman Family Charitable Trust.	Secured	10,500
Grants from Regional Charitable Trusts: Battens Charitable Trust.	Pending	500
Grants from National Charitable Trusts: Garfield Weston Foundation, Ralph Levy Charitable Company, DWF Foundation.	Pending	5,000
SSDC Community Grant	Pending	12,500
<b>Total</b>		<b>£ 78,850</b>

In 2020 and early 2021 none of the normal fund-raising activities were able to go ahead.

Parents pay fees for their children to attend the Pre-School. These fees are £15 for each session (£30 for the whole day). Some parents are entitled to a government subsidy under the funded childcare scheme, currently £4.23 per hour, for some of the time that their child attends Pre-School. This subsidy is paid to the Pre-School and deducted from parents' bills.

Future ongoing costs of maintenance will be covered by existing Pre-School revenue streams.

Staff and Governors are confident that the Pre-School will continue to be self-funding in its new setting.

## Conclusion and Recommendation

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

## Financial implications

The balance in the Area West Capital programme is £88,802. If the recommended grant of £12,500 is awarded, £76,302 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.



## South Somerset District Council 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 West - Area Chapter:** Healthy, Self-reliant Communities

### **Background Papers**

None

## **Appendix A**

### **Standard conditions applying to all SSDC Community Grants**

#### **The applicant agrees to:**

- Notify SSSDC 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 SSSDC 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 SSSDC 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 SSSDC officers to monitor and share the success of the project and the benefits to the community resulting from SSSDC'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 SSSDC Building Control Service when buildings regulations are required.
- Incorporate disabled access and provide an access statement where relevant.

#### **Special conditions**

- If the Pre-School closes within the next 5 years and the building is removed and sold, then the SSSDC Community Grant will be repaid pro-rata on valuation of final sale at 15.85%. This percentage is based on the SSSDC Community Grant contribution of the current project cost.