

West Coker Commemoration Hall (Executive Decision)

Strategic Director: Rina Singh, Strategic Director – Place and Performance
Acting Assistant Director: Helen Rutter, Assistant Director – Communities
Kim Close, Assistant Director - Communities
Service Manager: Kim Close, Area Development Manager - South
Lead Officer: Natalie Ross, Neighbourhood Development Officer
Contact Details: natalie.ross@southsomerset.gov.uk or (01935) 462956

Purpose of the Report

To consider funding towards a feasibility study looking at the possible redevelopment of the hall.

Public Interest

Community grants are available in each area to voluntary and charitable organisations, not-for-profit groups, Parish or Town councils and other organisations that benefit the wider community. Applications are encouraged that meet a clearly identified local need.

Recommendation

That members agree to fund this application of £2,500 from the Area South Capital budget.

Background

Community buildings play a crucial role in local communities as a focal point for community activity and a base for local groups. They also play a valuable role in building the capacity of local communities, encouraging active citizenship and developing social cohesion. Community buildings help to make communities stronger and healthier.

Community facilities also allow better access to services, this is particularly important in a large geographic district like South Somerset that has poor transport links in some areas and low car ownership.

Project

The West Coker Commemoration Fund acquired the hall, which is now being used as a village hall with a wide variety of uses. These include: keep fit classes; W.I. meetings; business training; arts classes and community events.

However, the hall is in need of renovation as it was built in the 1980s and is not of a high standard. There is no insulation and it is not very accessible and therefore not inclusive. Potential user groups have identified the need for a bigger kitchen and better toilets. Moving the existing toilets would also make the hall bigger and much more usable, therefore making the commemoration hall more sustainable.

This project is to look at the feasibility of redeveloping the hall and making the changes identified by existing and potential users. The group need to commission an architect to create possible design solutions and give an estimation of the costs, so that they can begin to fundraise for the redevelopment.

This application is recommended for approval as improving community facilities is part of the Area Development Plan and also community buildings need to ensure they can maximise usage and become as sustainable as possible.

Ward Members Comments

Cllr Gina Seaton is supportive of the application and commented that the hall committee aspires to shortly install a Wi Fi facility to attract usage of the hall for Meetings/Conferences or a small anchor business facility. This shows the committee are open to innovative ways of attracting future funding opportunities.

Cllr Cathy Bakewell also fully supports the application and had the following additional comments: The village has struggled without a village hall for many years. It has now regained control of the Commemoration Hall and this is a great asset. As mentioned by Officer the hall is not in a great state and needs a lot of work to bring it up to a suitable standard. However, the village has a lot of enthusiastic volunteers organising events and repairs. Recently I attended two events at the hall - the first a play themed around Yeovil Football Club, which was absolutely brilliant, although somewhat poorly attended. The second a live jazz evening, with tables in a cabaret setting, which was completely sold out and extra chairs had to be brought in. This event, although completely different from the first, was also superb. The events organised and the organisations using the hall serve a very wide spread of interests in the community and this is to be welcomed.

Assessment Scoring

Below is the summary table from the grant assessment form. It is recommended that funding is only awarded to projects scoring 22 points or more.

Category	Score	Maximum score
A Eligibility	Y	
B Equalities Impact	4	7
C Project	4	5
D Capacity of Organisation	12	15
E Financial need	4	7
F Innovation	1	3
<i>Grand Total</i>	25	37

Funding Breakdown

Funding Sources	% Funding of the Total Project Cost	Amount of Funding (£)	Status
Own Funds and fundraising	56	3200	Secured
SSDC Area South Grants	44	2500	This application
Total Project Cost	100%	5700	

Financial Implications

The uncommitted Area South Capital Budget stands at £145,660. If members agree this award of £2,500 it will leave a balance of £143,160.

Corporate Priority Implications

The project contributes to the following Corporate Focus Area:
Focus Four: Health and Communities

Carbon Emissions & Adapting to Climate Change Implications (NI188)

None at this time but should the redevelopment go ahead then the new insulation will improve the energy efficiency of the building.

Equality and Diversity Implications

None at this time but should the redevelopment go ahead then the hall will be far more accessible.

Background Papers: None