

District-wide Voluntary Sector Grants 2015/16 – overview report

Executive Portfolio Holders: Councillor Sylvia Seal, Leisure and Culture
 Councillor Ric Pallister, Leader of Council

Strategic Director: Rina Singh, Strategic Director (Place and Performance)

Assistant Directors: Helen Rutter/Kim Close, Assistant Director (Communities)

Lead Officers: Helen Rutter/Kim Close, Assistant Director (Communities)

Contact Details: helen.rutter@southsomerset.gov.uk
 kim.close@southsomerset.gov.uk or (01935) 462060

1. Purpose of the Report

To give an overview of the District-wide organisations seeking funding support from SSDC for 2015/16. To report on the overall grant support programmes awarded to the voluntary and community sectors in 2013/14.

2. Public Interest

SSDC supports a range of voluntary sector organisations via its Community Grants programme. This helps us to deliver Council services, as well as support groups working in local communities. Small or local groups applying for one-off funding apply to Area Committees; District-wide organisations are generally supported on a longer term basis via Service Level Agreements (SLAs) reporting to our District Executive.

3. Recommendation

That District Executive:

- Notes the overview of funding to voluntary sector and community organisations made both district wide and in the areas during 2013/14 and the proposed funding for 2014/15 if approved in Agenda items 9 to 13.

Description	Purpose	Budget for 2014/15	Budget Holder/Lead Officer	Funding recommended	Agenda item
CVS Grants	SLA with South Somerset Voluntary and Community Action	74,260	Helen Rutter	74,260	9
Equalities & Diversity	SLA with Access for All	8,000	Jo Morgan	8,000	10
District Wide Health and Well-being grants	SLAs with voluntary arts organisations	23,350	Pauline Burr	18,000	11
Youth Development	SLA with Somerset Rural Youth Project	8,000	Rob Parr	8,000	12
CAB Grants	SLA with South Somerset Citizens Advice	121,730	Kim Close	121,730	13
	Total	£235,340		£229,990	

4. Background

Each year, SSDC supports a number of district-wide voluntary sector organisations through funding (via Service Level Agreements) and local one-off awards to support innovative projects. This funding is already in the Medium Term Financial Plan approved in February 2015*. The award of the grants themselves are subject to direct approval by the Executive.

- All grants are considered using our adopted set of SSDC Community Grants Policies. For organisations to be eligible for funding they must be able to demonstrate how their work will help SSDC meet our Corporate Aims, as well as other relevant SSDC Strategies;
- Where we support organisations in the longer term and acknowledge they are delivering services on our behalf, we develop a Service Level Agreement (SLA), joining up with other funders where possible;
- SSDC is able to work closely in partnership with a range of voluntary sector organisations to ensure that services are delivered according to local needs, and that value for money is achieved.

5. Performance Monitoring

Each year, a monitoring and review process is carried out with each organisation on an SLA. Where possible, we work with voluntary organisations to develop a core set of performance indicators (PIs) and targets, showing how these link directly with our Corporate Plan, and other relevant service strategies

The Council works in partnership throughout the year with the organisations receiving support. Officers check compliance with any funding conditions and discuss any changes to planned work. Some organisations also have a Councillor serving on their board or Management Committee, and regular feedback is received. At least 1 formal annual monitoring meeting takes place during the year (normally 2). Feedback is gained from service users, other agencies, officers and members, which is considered in preparing this report.

6. Overview of Voluntary Sector and Community grants 2013/14

SSDC awarded £374,443 in grants to 84 voluntary sector and community projects in 2013/14. A more detailed analysis of the 66 projects supported by the Area community grants programme shows that the value of these projects totalled £1,279,925. This means that for every £1 invested, £8 of external funding is secured for the voluntary sector and community projects in South Somerset.

Please see Appendix 1 for further details.

7. Other Funding

Most organisations with which we have SLAs involve other funding bodies. Some are County-wide and include the other District Councils and the County Council. Where possible, the monitoring and review meeting/process is carried out collectively and the voluntary organisation is only asked to supply one set of statistics, which can be analysed by District.

8. The changing funding landscape

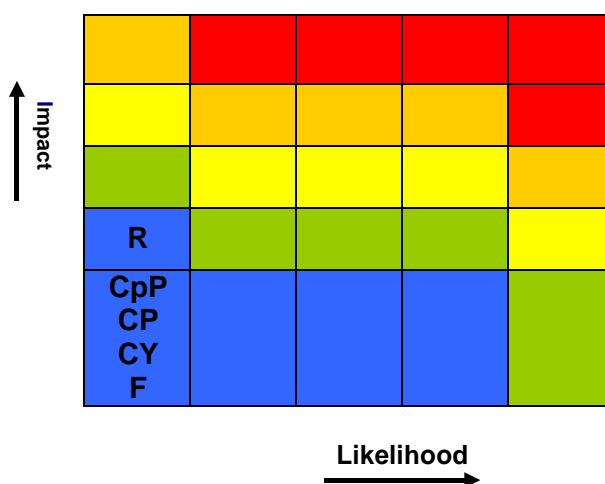
2014 has continued to be challenging for organisations which have previously been dependent on public sector funding. Severe and continuing cuts at Somerset County Council since 2011 have been having an impact. Government funding streams have reduced or been redesigned which has provided both challenges and opportunities for the sector. Government cuts to some of the national bodies (e.g. Arts Council, Defra, Legal Services Commission), have had a direct impact on the ways in which the voluntary sector is able access traditional funding streams. We work closely with the organisations affected, to help them through the transitional period of becoming less dependent on grants and developing other business models, or applying to some of the new funding streams.

Some organisations do not need direct funding but we help them in other ways such as loan, finance and financial advice or help with relocation to more suitable premises. An example of this during 2014 was South Somerset MIND.

9. Financial Implications

See individual funding reports in Agenda.

10. Risk Matrix



Key

Categories	Colours (for further detail please refer to Risk management strategy)
R = Reputation	Red = High impact and high probability
CpP = Corporate Plan Priorities	Orange = Major impact and major probability
CP = Community Priorities	Yellow = Moderate impact and moderate probability
CY = Capacity	Green = Minor impact and minor probability
F = Financial	Blue = Insignificant impact and insignificant probability

11. Corporate Priority Implications

All organisations are assessed in light of the Council's Corporate Aims. Our Community Grants programme most significantly supports the following Corporate Aims:

- Environment
- Health & Communities

Details of how the activities of each individual organisation link to relevant Corporate Aims are included in the Appendices.

12. Carbon Emissions and Climate Change Implications

A number of the organisations supported will contribute to the relevant climate change targets in our Corporate Plan – included in each Appendix.

13. Equality and Diversity Implications

Working with the voluntary sector is one of the Council's means of providing services to hard to reach groups and engaging with communities who otherwise find it hard to access public services. Supporting the VCS increases community engagement and participation. All groups supported by SSDC are required to have an Equalities Policy. A stage 1 EqA has been carried out on each assessment in the attached appendices.

14. Background Papers

Case files, monitoring reports and paperwork submitted by funded organisations
SSDC Voluntary Sector Strategy 2010
Localism Act 2011
EqAs where funding reductions are proposed

Overview of Voluntary Sector and Community Grants 2013 - 2014

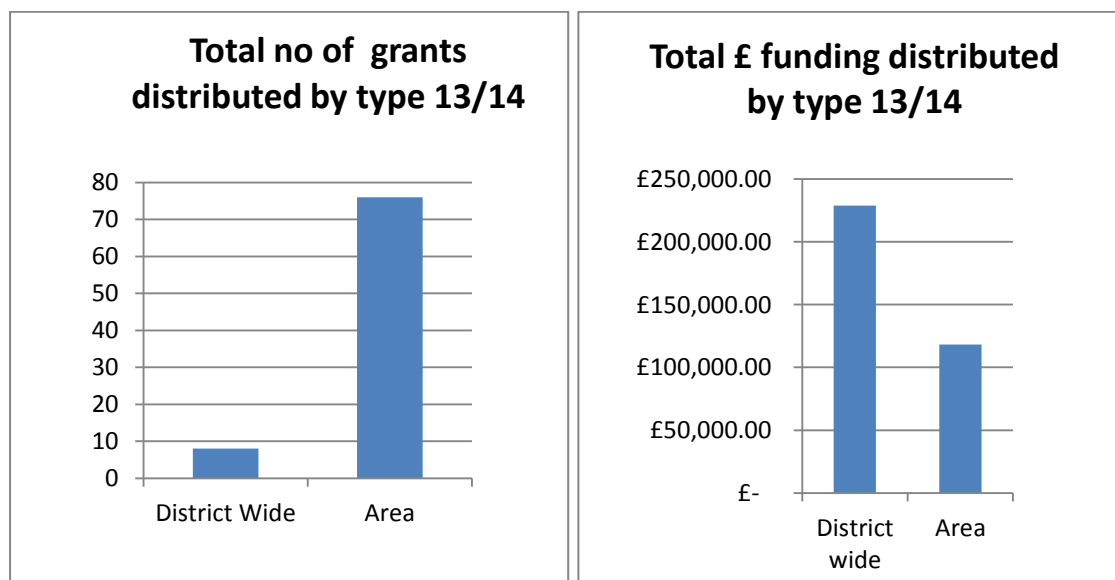
Background

Each year SSDC supports a wide range of voluntary sector organisations through both on-going partnership funding (via Service Level Agreements) as well as one-off grants. Area Community grants are agreed by either the Area Development Manager and Ward Member(s) or Area Committees and District Wide funding by District Executive.

Grant funding for 2013/2014

In 2013/2014 SSDC awarded:

	Total no of grants awarded	Total £ amount of grant awarded
Area Community grants	66	£143,608
Voluntary sector grants	3	£203,990
Community Health & Leisure Youth Development funding	10	£2,090
Funding for Arts organisations	4	£16,755
Equalities & Diversity funding	1	£8,000
	84	£374,443



Grant funding comparisons 2012/2013 against 2013/2014

	2012/2013		2013/2014	
	Total no of grants awarded	Total amount of grants awarded	Total no of grants awarded	Total amount of grants awarded
Area Community grants	88	£149,862	66	£143,608
Voluntary sector grants	3	£200,140	3	£203,990
Community Health & Leisure Youth Development funding	14	£15,028	10	£2,090
Funding for Arts organisations	4	£15,150	4	£16,755
Equalities & Diversity funding	1	£7,000	1	£8,000
Community Sport & Leisure	5	*£128,825	0	0
	115	£516,005	84	£374,443

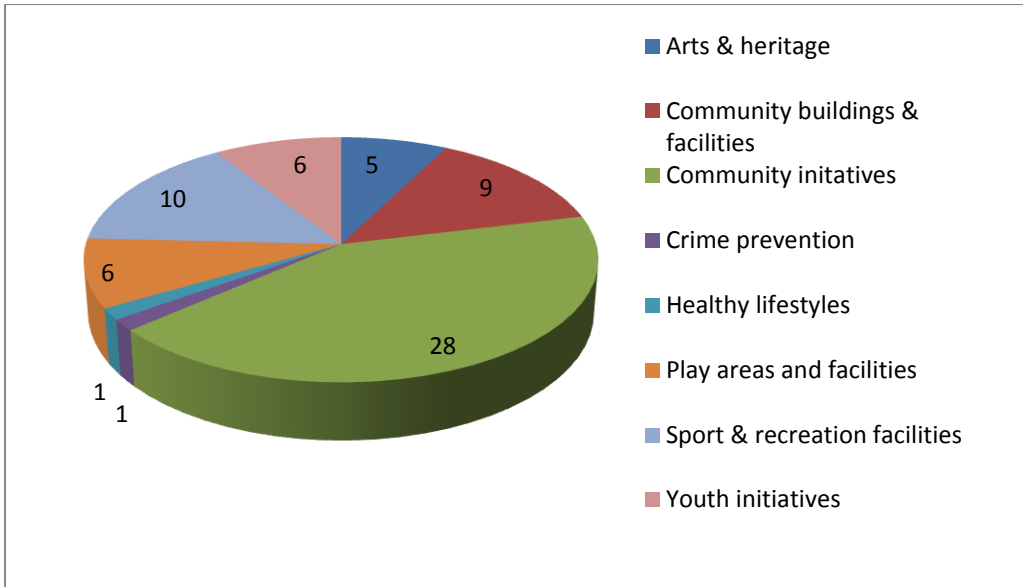
*grants awarded for MUGA and Play Area improvements.

Area community grants

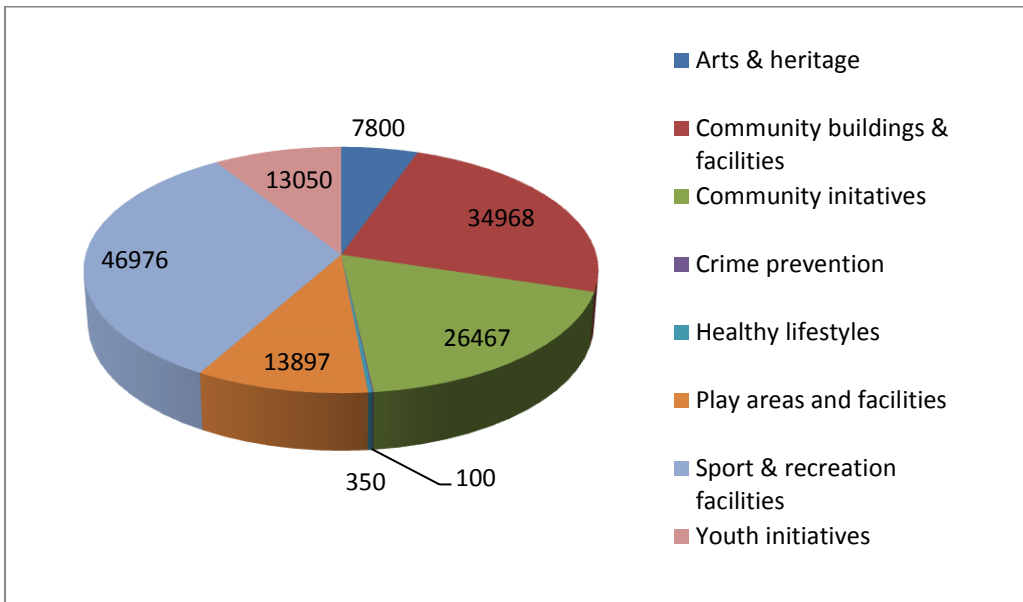
The total project costs supported from the Area community grants budget was **£1,279,925** indicating that for every £1 invested, £8 of external funding is secured for the voluntary sector and community projects in South Somerset. Community grants are either for one-off grants or funding agreed under a Service Level Agreement.

By Area	Total £ awarded	Total £ project costs	% awarded against project costs	Total £ Parish & Town council contribution
North (35 parishes)	55,188	309,024	18	12,260
East (39 parishes)	46,859	309,403	15	13,310
West (33 parishes)	27,414	581,905	5	2,438
South (9 parishes)	14,146	79,592	18	6,500
	143,608	1,279,925		34,508

Total number of grants awarded across the areas for 13/14 by theme:



Total £ funding awarded across the areas for 13/14 by theme:



Appendix 2 gives examples of projects supported in the local community by our community grants scheme.

Voluntary Sector Grants

Service Level Agreements awarded - £74,260 to South Somerset Voluntary Community Action (SSVCA), £121,730 to South Somerset Citizen Advice Bureau (SSCAB) and £8,000 to Somerset Rural Youth Project (SRYP).

SSDC supports SSVCA and SSCAB to ensure that both voluntary organisations and people across South Somerset are able to access free, impartial and expert advice; to deliver services to some of the people most in need and to meet a range of objectives in our Corporate Plan.

SSDC works in partnership with SRYP to provide additional services for young people aged 11-25 in rural Somerset. SRYP provides stimulating things to do and places to go, target those who are disadvantaged and encourage positive contributions and supporting choices for young people living in rural areas of South Somerset.

Community Health & Leisure Youth Development funding

A total of £2,090 was awarded against projects totaling £4,180 (50% awarded against project costs). £600 was awarded for 6 summer play days across the district, £140 for an art project and £1,350 to help set up and develop 3 youth clubs.

Funding for Arts organisations

4 Arts organisations were awarded Service Level Agreements amounting to £16,755. This supported 25 projects of which there was 3,030 participation and 60,705 attendances to events held.

Equalities & Diversity funding

Service Level Agreement awarded - £8,000 to South Somerset Disability Forum to provide specific services and expertise and ensures compliance with our Public Sector Equality Duties under the Equality Act 2010.

Projects supported by the Area Community Grant Scheme 2013/14

Our successful community grants programme supports voluntary and charitable organisations, not-for-profit groups, parish or town councils and other organisations with ideas to improve local quality of life. Our main programme of community grants can fund up to 50% of your project costs with a maximum of £12,500 per project.

Area West - Blackdown Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Natural Futures Project

Project costs - £406,088

SSDC award - £5,000

This exciting project uses a wide range of activities and events to teach people about nature and wildlife of the Blackdown Hills. SSDC supporting this project meant that the AONB managed to secure £246,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund along with other funding from charitable trusts, local businesses and in kind volunteer time.

This 3 year project has 3 strands:

Discover it! – offering 9 x 6 month traineeships and 200 days of training in species and habitat identification and over 400 training day places to local volunteers.

Share It! – Knowledge gained from the Discover it activities shared with a wider audience through new pages on the AONB website, a new smartphone app called 'Naturally Blackdown Hills' and via 30 local events.

Do it! - Support provided to communities throughout the Blackdown Hills to develop and deliver their own 'community nature projects' along with a wide range of activities and events held; including workshops, nature talks/discover days, 'Bio blitz' family events, show case events and creation of 15 community nature projects.

Area West – Chard W.A.T.C.H Project

Project costs - £1,080

SSDC award - £750

W.A.T.C.H is a long established user led organisation which helps socially isolated adults, including those with mental health problems and disabilities reconnect with their community through friendships and support and have around 75 members and 26 registered volunteers. They meet through regular weekly drop in sessions, organised activities and events.

SSDC support contributed towards the purchase of 4 new laptops to help members develop their computing skills, gain recognised training qualifications and increase their confidence with technology.

The W.A.T.C.H project also links with the Forefront Centre - Work Life Project which helps further development of IT skills, help with CV writing, job searching, making a job application with the aim of ultimately getting people back into the work place.

Area East – Castle Cary Eat Cary Project

Project Cost - £4,482

SSDC award - £750

Eat Cary was established to improve local horticultural skills, enhance community cohesion and promote the growing of fruit and vegetables and the preparation of healthy food.

The space that has been created by the group is a community resource providing a meeting place for the whole community which also supports and enables the delivery of a BTEC course in Horticulture to year 9 & 10 students by Ansford Academy. The group also runs a regular programme of workshops and courses for the whole community.

The project has received grant support from Lottery Awards for All, Viridor and has also been given £3,000 from an anonymous donor.

Area East – Wincanton CATCH

Project Cost - £8,500

SSDC award - £750

Community Action to Transform the Cale Habitat (CATCH) is a volunteer group founded in 2013. Its objective is to restore the natural habitat of the River Cale in the Wincanton area.

The group aims to give nature a helping hand to bring it back to a haven for natural wildlife, as well as a recreational resource for the inhabitants of the town.

The project began with simple things like organised litter picks, and clearing out some of the historical debris from the river. Later in 2013 we invited the Wild Trout Trust to inspect the river, and give advice and guidance on where and how we could make improvements. Based upon their report, they have identified several targets we hope to achieve in the short and medium terms

SSDC provided some advice about setting up the group and a start-up grant towards equipment, publicity etc. On Thursday, 23rd October 2013, CATCH reached the high point of its fledgling existence when the Environment Agency delivered 2,500 fish – a mixture of roach, dace and chub – to be released into the River Cale, as they have deemed it now capable of supporting the extra wildlife.

Area North - Robert Sewers Village Hall, Curry Rivel

Project costs - £46,000

SSDC award - £8,000

The Robert Sewers village hall in Curry Rivel is a registered charity operating under the Charity Commission's model village hall trust scheme.

Through considerable public consultation the management committee agreed the following objectives;

- To maintain and update the fabric of the building to make it warm and inviting for users.
- To make the hall more accessible to users
- The village hall committee to actively put on events to encourage use and raise funds for the village hall
- To enhance the overall user experience and encourage additional usage.

In order to achieve these objectives, a three stage business plan was produced.

Stage one included improvements to the booking system, re-decoration of the hall and new lighting and heating systems which are more economical and cost effective.

This stage of the improvements was supported by an SSDC grant of £4,500 in June 2012.

Stage two of the programme (to which this case study refers) delivered an extension to the front of the building to improve the entrance area and create an internal lobby. This has improved access to the building and allowed for a better flow of footfall between the hall, kitchen and toilet areas.

Stage three has seen the complete refurbishment of the kitchen, which was extended as part of the remodelling of the entrance lobby following the stage two works.

The Area North Development team has been working with the management committee throughout the programme of improvements and has been able to provide advice on project management and programming as well as assisting with grant funding. Through SSDC support, the management committee successfully applied for a Big Lottery Awards for All grant of £10,000.

Area North – Barrington Football Club to assist with the purchase of the football pitch at Barrington

Project costs - £19,000

SSDC award - £9,500

Barrington Football Club was founded in 1923 and is a community based football club which has played on the same land since its establishment. The landowner had decided to sell the freehold and offered the club a first option to acquire the freehold. Owning the land would ensure there continued to be long term access to a local good quality sporting facility for the people of Barrington and surrounding villages.

The parish council and football club worked closely together to ensure the land was retained for the community should the club ever be wound up, but despite general agreement that that this was a worthwhile project, it proved difficult to find external funders for the purchase.

The grant from Area North was instrumental in helping to ensure the long term security of recreational land for the community and whilst the conveyancing is still not complete at the time of writing this report, it is anticipated that it will shortly reach a successful conclusion.

This was an unusual grant for Area North, but serves as an example of the wide range of community projects that can be helped to fruition.

Area South – Yeovil Tennis Club

Project costs - £54,408

SSDC award - £5,980

Yeovil Tennis Club has been in existence for over 65 years and is the only tennis club in the town, providing opportunities for both adults and juniors. The club has grown over recent years and currently has a membership of 70 senior and over 90 junior players. The main purpose of the club is to promote the sport of tennis in Yeovil. The club provides a variety of opportunities including junior coaching, squads, adult beginners and improvers, wheelchair tennis and cardio tennis, league teams and tournaments.

The increased links with the local Schools and Lufton College increased demand for court time, so funds were given towards the development of a fourth court and associated floodlighting. The project also includes a new path and extra wide gates in order to allow use by the wheelchair tennis group. Yeovil Tennis Club sought advice from South Somerset Disability Forum to ensure the plans met the necessary requirements. The new court will also allow for older people to take advantage of the morning club sessions.

Area South – Abbey Community Association

Project costs - £3,500

SSDC award - £584

Funding was given towards the installation of an induction loop and sound reinforcement system in the Abbey Manor Community Centre Main Hall, together with the purchase of ancillary equipment such as microphones and stands. The loop system will be suitable for simultaneous use with music PA equipment brought in by certain user groups. This combined system will benefit all users, not just those with a hearing impairment, that have difficulty given the adverse hall acoustics. User groups expected to benefit most frequently are the weekly Tea Dance Group, the guides and scouts and family services held by St James' Church. The system will also broaden the range of activities for which the hall is suitable, such as public meetings, receptions, larger clubs and presentations. It is hoped that this will bring new users and add community benefit.

Fundraising has been carried out throughout 2013 by a guide leader who is registered deaf. This has included a number of table-top sales, an archaeology evening, a "Big Lunch" street party at Forde Park and other hall user-led events. Some business users made donations and grants have been secured from the Parish Council, St James' PCC and ASDA in addition to the Area South Community Grant.