



Community Grant to West Coker Parish Council – West Coker Pavilion Solar PV Installation (Executive Decision)

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Purpose of the Report

Councillors are asked to consider the awarding of a grant of £12,435.00 towards the installation of solar photovoltaic panels on the new West Coker Pavilion.

Public Interest

Awarding grants is a key way that SSSC supports and helps to deliver community projects sponsored by Parishes and voluntary community organisations in the towns and villages across the district.

West Coker Parish Council has applied to the Area South community grants programme for financial assistance with the costs of purchase, installation, commissioning and certification of solar photovoltaic panels for the new West Coker Pavilion. The Locality Officer is submitting this report to enable the Area South Committee to make an informed decision about the application and has assessed the application.

Recommendation

It is recommended that Councillors award a grant of £12,435.00, the grant to be allocated from the Area South capital programme and subject to SSSC standard conditions for community grants (appendix A)

Application Details

Name of applicant:	West Coker Parish Council
Project:	West Coker Pavilion Solar PV Installation
Total project cost:	£24,870.00
Amount requested from SSSC:	£12,435.00
% amount requested	50%
Application assessed by:	Beth Poole

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
A Supports Council Plan/Area Chapter	1	1
B Supports Equalities & Diversity	1	1
C Supports Environment Strategy	3	3
D Need for Project	10	8
E Capacity of Organisation	15	15
F Financial need	7	4
Total	37	32

Background

The project to construct a new pavilion on the recreation ground at Halves Lane, West Coker was conceived around a decade ago to replace three dilapidated, inefficient buildings used by West Coker and Hardington Cricket Club, East Somerset Scout District, and the West Coker Youth Club with a single, multi-use facility to serve not only these groups but the wider community, whilst improving and extending access to sports, leisure, and recreation facilities for all. It's owned and managed by West Coker Parish Council as the Sole Managing Trustee for the 'Recreation Ground for Children Charity' (registered charity number 304669).

Construction of the new pavilion finally began late last year, following significant delays caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, and will be completed in August 2022. Its design has used 'green' solutions to reduce carbon emissions and increase its energy efficiency wherever possible, including high specification insulation, double glazing, motion-sensor LED lighting, and air source heat pumps to power underfloor heating. The next phase of this project is the addition of solar photovoltaic panels to the pavilion's roof space to further reduce its use of fossil fuels, create sustainable long-term cost savings, and contribute to its 'green' credentials.

Parish information

Parish*	West Coker
Parish Population	2,018
No. of dwellings	947

*Taken from the 2011 census profile

The project

Eighty solar photovoltaic panels will be installed on the pavilion's south-easterly facing side of the roof, covering approximately two hundred square meters, to maximise solar exposure. The installation will use a twenty-five-kilowatt system that will be compatible with battery storage and a renewable energy grid, whilst utilising electrical connections pre-emptively installed in the design of the building, reducing installation costs. This project has a short pay-back period of less than seven years and may provide an opportunity for the Pavilion to generate income in the future by returning surplus energy to the grid.

Local support / evidence of need

The Parish Council recognises that there's an ongoing climate emergency and the necessity to consider the environmental impact of its decisions. As such, optimisation of the energy performance and efficiency of the West Coker Pavilion epitomises responsible stewardship of public money by reducing its energy demands and decreasing its ongoing running costs, at a time when energy prices are increasing at an alarming and unprecedented rate and many households are facing a cost-of-living crisis. This measure will ensure the long-term energy security of the Pavilion, avoid higher energy costs being passed on to the community, and reduce financial pressures that can often prevent community facilities from thriving.

Project costs

Project costs	Cost £
80 x 'vision style' solar panels	15,120.00
Equipment costs	4,949.88
Installation	3,500.00
Delivery	1,200.00
Electrical, Tray, Cables and Accessories	500.00
Discount	400.00
Total	24,869.88

Funding plan

Funding source	Secured pending	or	Amount £
West Coker Parish Council	Secured		11,435.00
Recreation Ground for Children Charity	Secured		1,000.00
SSDC Community Grant	Pending		12,435.00
Total			24,870.00

Conclusion and Recommendation

It is recommended that a grant of £12,435.00 is awarded.

Financial Implications

The balance in the Area South Capital programme is £132,175. If the recommended grant of is awarded, £119,740 will remain.

Grants are awarded subject to all other funding being secured before the commencement of the project and are on a 50% 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

Council Plan themes and areas of focus for 2022-2023

A plan specific to West Coker under Priority 2 'Healthy and Reliant Communities' is to support the delivery of new or improvements to community halls.

Priority 1 - Environment

- Continue the delivery of the Environment Strategy action plan, reducing our carbon emissions by 10% every year, to reach carbon neutrality by 2030.
- Deliver schemes to enhance the quality of our local environment and its resilience to adapt to climate change.
- Deliver the County-wide Climate Environment Strategy.
- Support the development of environmental and ecological aspects within local, parish and neighbourhood plans.

Priority 2 - Healthy, self-reliant Communities

- Collaborate with local partners to reduce the impact of social isolation and create a feeling of Community.
- Work with local partners to support people in improving their physical and mental health and wellbeing and reduce inequalities.
- Enable quality and inclusive cultural, leisure and sport activities.

Priority 3 - Economy and Covid-19 Recovery

- Support individuals and businesses through the pandemic, including response, recovery and growth initiatives (including any new grant schemes in the new financial year).
- Enable and encourage businesses to become more environmentally sustainable (aligned to 2030 Climate Emergency commitments).

SSDC's Environment Strategy and Action Plan 2022-2023

- Enable and signpost grant funding opportunities for environmental initiatives.
"Provide support, alongside partners, for communities and parishes to access existing funding for environmental initiatives, including renewable energy."



South Somerset District Council

- Decarbonisation of estate through energy efficiency improvements and electrifying heating and lighting away from fossil fuels.
- Engagement with key stakeholders around zero-carbon agenda.

Carbon Emissions and Climate Change Implications

This project will optimise the energy performance of the West Coker Pavilion by increasing its energy efficiency and further reducing any reliance on carbon-emitting generation from the grid, making a significant local contribution to South Somerset's goal to become carbon neutral by 2030 and leading through example. Furthermore, the need for carbon-emitting generation will be offset by returning surplus solar energy to the grid.

Equality and Diversity Implications

<i>An Equality Impact Relevance Check Form has been completed in respect of the Proposal?</i>	Yes
<i>The Impact Relevance Check indicated that a full EIA was required?</i>	No
<i>If an EIA was not required, please attach the Impact Relevance Check Form as an Appendix to this report and provide a brief summary of its findings in the comments box below.</i>	
<i>If an EIA was required, please attach the completed EIA form as an Appendix to this report and provide a brief summary of the result of your Equality Impact Assessment in the comment box below.</i>	
Additional Comments	
The installation of solar panels will contribute to long-term sustainable financial management of the pavilion, serving <i>all</i> of the community for generations to come. The building has been designed in accordance with Part M (access to and use of buildings) of the Building Regulations 2010 and the Equality Act 2010 (reasonable adjustments for accessibility). However, an equalities and diversity policy is currently not held by the applicant and is recommended.	

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.
- Complete an evaluation survey when requested after the completion of the project.
- Note that they cannot apply for another community grant for the same project within a 3-year period of this award.

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.

Additional conditions applying to Facilities

- Provide good quality signage to buildings and facilities.

Special conditions

None.