Grant to Norton sub Hamdon Village Hall Trust (Executive Decision)

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Purpose of the Report

Councillors are asked to consider the awarding of a grant towards the costs of a programme of improvements to the village hall in Norton sub Hamdon.

Public Interest

Norton sub Hamdon Village Hall Trust has applied for financial assistance from the Area North community grants programme. The application has been assessed by the Neighbourhood Development Officer who has submitted this report to allow the Area North Committee to make an informed decision on the application.

Recommendation

It is recommended that councillors award a grant of £5,000 to Norton sub Hamdon Village Hall Trust, the grant to be allocated from the Area North capital programme (Local Priority Schemes), subject to SSDC standard conditions for community grants (appendix A).

Application Details

Name of applicant	Norton sub Hamdon Village Hall Trust
Project	Norton sub Hamdon Village Hall improvements
Total project cost	£13,322
Amount requested from SSDC	£5,000
Application assessed by	Mary Ostler, Neighbourhood Development Officer

Community Grants Assessment Score

The table below shows the grant scoring for this application. In order to be considered for SSDC funding under the Community Grants policies, applications need to meet the minimum score of 22.

Category	Actual Score	Maximum score possible
A Eligibility	Y	Y
B Equalities Impact	5	7
C Need for project	5	5
D Capacity of Organisation	11	15
E Financial need	4	7
F Innovation	2	3
Grand Total	**27**	**37**

Background

Norton sub Hamdon Village Hall Trust is a charitable trust (registered with The Charity Commission number 267403) which manages the village hall for the benefit of the inhabitants of Norton sub Hamdon and surrounding villages.

The hall was built in 2006 to replace a smaller and simpler building on the same site and is adjacent to the school and a short walk from the community shop and post office. It is easy to reach for villagers and easy to find for visitors and well-used and well-known, in the village and in the wider area, as a pleasant and welcoming environment for a variety of activities and events. The building is fully accessible.

Parish Information

Parish*	Norton sub Hamdon
Parish Population*	743
No. of dwellings*	319

*Taken from the 2011 census profile

The project

The Trust committee became aware that refurbishment work was needed during their regular monitoring and maintenance checks, as well as being advised of the issues by hall users and local inhabitants.

The wooden decking area shows severe signs of rot in places and potentially will become hazardous if not replaced. The middle patio doors are again of wooden construction and the door and frames are rotting. Apart from being unsightly, this could eventually lead to security issues and possible safety hazards. The exterior of the hall has a painted wood cladding and the paintwork needs attention as it is now flaking and knots in the wood are becoming loose.

The Trust intends to replace the doors and decking with more durable materials which will have a longer life expectancy and be easier to maintain, and to repaint the wood cladding exterior.

Local support and evidence of need

The hall is in use almost every day by regular user groups including keep fit and dance classes, sewing group, yoga, toddler, children and youth groups. There is frequent use at weekends for celebrations such as weddings and birthdays and village events - for example flower show and pantomime - which attract hundreds of people from all walks of life and of all ages.

The hall is also let regularly to business users such as the NHS Blood Donors and SSDC.

In addition to general and on-going maintenance of the hall, various works have been carried out including redecoration of the ladies and disabled toilets. The car park has been re-lined and new bollards put in and a hearing loop installed paid for out of hall funds.

The Trust has been able to employ a local resident as a permanent, part-time cleaner and is fortunate to have volunteers who also help with the cleaning of the hall.

In relation to the project, the Trust is fortunate to have the support of volunteers from the village who have been mobilised to undertake the manual work of lifting the old decking in preparation for installation of the new surface.

Project Costs

Replacement of existing wooden doors with aluminium	£4,300
Replacement of wooden decking area with concrete	£5,572
Exterior paintwork	£3,450
Total project cost	**£13,322**

Funding Plan

Funding Source	Funds secured
Parish Council	£3,000
Own funds	£4,600
Ongoing fundraising	£700
Total secured	**£8,300**
Amount requested from SSDC	£5,000

Consents and permissions

None applicable

Conclusion and Recommendation

This application is for £5,000 which represents 37% of the total project costs. The Trust is highly committed to continuing the successful running of the village hall which is essential as a gathering place for many groups and social events and an important part of the fabric that makes for a thriving sense of community in Norton.

It is recommended that this application for £5,000 is supported.

Financial Implications

If the previous grant report is agreed, the unallocated balance for 2017/18 in the Local Priority Project – enhancing facilities and services budget, will be £14,304. If the recommended grant of £5,000 is awarded, £9,304 will remain. The Area North Capital Programme also has an uncommitted balance of £154,655 currently profiled for future year allocations.

Council Plan Implications

The project supports:
SSDC Plan: Health & Communities: Support at least 50 community projects (H); Environment: Enabling energy reduction (M)
Area North Development Plan priority: Self-help and community facilities

Carbon Emissions & Adapting to Climate Change Implications

New doors and maintenance of the exterior finish of the building will minimise heat loss and increase energy / costs efficiency.

Equality and Diversity Implications

In replacing the decking and door/frame there will be negative impact on access in and out of the hall for disabled users.

Appendix A

Standard conditions applying to all Community Grants.

This grant offer is made based on the information provided in application form no. AN17/09 and represents 37% of the total project costs. The grant will be reduced if the costs of the total project are less than originally anticipated. Phased payments may be made in exceptional circumstances (e.g. to help with cash-flow for a larger building project) and are subject to agreement.

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 this 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 if this was not already in place at the time of the application and before starting the project.
- 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 where buildings regulations are required.
- Incorporate disabled access and provide an access statement where relevant.