

Community Grant to Ark at Egwood Indoor Activity Space (Executive Decision)

Strategic Director: Kirsty Larkins, Director of Service Deliver
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Purpose of the Report

Councillors are asked to consider the awarding of a grant of £12,500 towards Ark at Egwood Indoor Activity Space

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.

The Ark Project has applied to the Area West community grants programme for financial assistance with the costs of installing a new indoor activity space. The Locality Officer is submitting this report to enable the Area West Committee to make an informed decision about the application and has assessed the application.

Recommendations

It is recommended that Councillors award a grant £12,500, 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:	Ark at Egwood
Project:	Indoor Activity Space
Total project cost:	£47900
Amount requested from SSDC:	£12,500
% amount requested	21.6 %
Application assessed by:	Nathan Turnbull

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	2
D Need for Project	10	8
E Capacity of Organisation	15	14
F Financial need	7	4
Total	37	30

Background

- Acts of Random Kindness (ARK), is a land-based day facility at Egwood, near the village of Merriott. On 12 acres of land, it comprises animals, horticulture and communal buildings, and offers a range of activities, experiences and support services to improve health, wellbeing and opportunities for all.
- There is no other day support service provider like ARK in South Somerset that caters for all ages and varying needs. Since inception, ARK has continued to steadily grow, despite Covid and currently offers support on a daily and weekly basis for people with learning disability, autism, and recovering from brain injury, mental ill health, Social Isolation and young people in support of confidence building and social engagement.
- ARK at Egwood aims to: Provide meaningful, transferable life experiences and practical skills for adults and young people.
- Provide personal, targeted, cost-effective therapies, in a non-threatening and engaging environment.
- Social integration and lessen social isolation in our local communities.
- Provide day placements for young people alongside education.
- Provide volunteering opportunities for local people; Partner with Adult and Children's Social Care.

There is currently 45 Volunteers and 5 Paid staff.

Parish information

Parish*	Merriott
Parish Population	1979
No. of dwellings	882



The project

At present ARK has limited indoor dry, warm space, which can have an impact on the day to day running during the winter months and inclement weather. The demand for support services at ARK is increasing and ARK wishes to be able to maintain a high level of service all year round. Consequently, ARK wishes to purchase two converted 40ft shipping containers, to be placed side by side, joined and used as a classroom/activity space for the various groups attending ARK.

The staff, attendees and volunteers at ARK will all benefit from having a classroom/activity space. ARK supports people with all abilities, has a wheelchair accessible pathway through the site and will ensure that this project is also accessible to all. ARK is also becoming a community-based asset and at present supports a weekly Baby Rhyme Time class, Tai Chi sessions and hosts partner organisations in having meetings and team days at ARK. They would ensure that the containers would be able to be booked/used by the local community, partner organisations and schools.

All of the above will benefit by being able to attend ARK all year round and engage with meaningful and purposeful activities, regardless of the time of year or weather.

The project will involve buying and installing 2 x 40 ft converted containers, all groundwork, the Electrical Hook up and heating.

Local support / evidence of need

ARK has recently been voted in the Natwest Top 100 Social Enterprises as well as the top 25 Trailblazing Newcomers for 2021.

An Open Day was held on 28th August 21, where over a thousand people attended during the course of the day.

Despite Covid, ARK has worked hard to ensure that the support provided continues to grow, which has been evident in the number of attendees and volunteer growth. In addition, ARK was successful in receiving grant funding from the Armed Forces Covenant Trust Fund for a 12 month project to socially connect with our local Armed Forces Community

Project costs

Project costs	Cost £
2 x 40 ft converted containers (including Electric, Lights and Heating)	41400
Groundworks and siting of containers	6500
Total	£47900

Funding plan

Funding source	Secured or pending	Amount £
Parish/Town Council	Secured	100
Own Funds	Secured	8550
The Clarks Foundation	Secured	4000
National Lottery Awards for All	Secured	9750
Local Family Donation	Secured	3000
Barchester's Charitable Foundation	Secured	10000
SSDC Community Grant	Pending	12500
Total		£47900

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 £68,214. If the recommended grant of £12,500 is awarded, £55,714 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.

Council Plan Implications

Council Plan themes and Areas of focus for 2021/22

Healthy, Self-reliant Communities

- Work with partners to reduce the impact of social isolation and create a feeling of community
- Work with partners to support people in improving their own physical and mental health and wellbeing
- Enable quality cultural, leisure and sport activities
- Support residents facing hardship
- Support older people to live and age well by increasing independence, reducing loneliness, and improving financial security



- Support community led initiatives that contribute towards combatting climate change

Carbon Emissions and Climate Change Implications

None identified

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	
<p>ARK is an inter-generational, therapeutic, land-based day service provision, providing support to people of all ages and varying needs to improve confidence and mental and physical health and wellbeing. The grant will enable ARK to improve its indoor facilities thereby maintaining a high level of service all year round and enabling increased participation from people from certain Protected Characteristics. Given the purpose of the funding It is anticipated that there will be no negative impacts for people sharing Protected Characteristics.</p>	

Background Papers

- Appendix: A: SSDC standard conditions for community grants
 B: Equality Impact Assessment

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.
- Grant being awarded subject to Planning Permission being granted.

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.