

Grant to Chard Town Council towards The Guildhall Air Conditioning Project (Executive Decision)

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Purpose of the Report

Councillors are asked to consider the awarding of a grant of £5,000 towards Chard Towns Guildhall Air Conditioning Project.

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.

Chard Town Council has applied to the Area West community grants programme for financial assistance with the costs of installing air-conditioning in the Auditorium of the Guildhall. 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 £5,000 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:	Chard Town Council
Project:	install air-conditioning in the Auditorium of the Guildhall
Total project cost:	£25,400
Amount requested from SSDC:	£5,000
% amount requested	19.69
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	2
C Supports Environment Strategy	3	2
D Need for Project	10	8
E Capacity of Organisation	15	12
F Financial need	7	5
Total	37	30

Background

The Guildhall is a Grade II* Listed Building in the centre of the town that dates back to 1837 and was formerly the Corn Exchange. It is situated on the site of former municipal buildings and a market from the late 18th century. Much work has been carried out since this time with major renovations starting in 1998 and being completed and reopened in 2003 assistance.

The Guildhall complex is used primarily as a community building for a wide range of activities and in 2009 it became the permanent base for Chard Town Council. It is an important civic building and houses the Mayor's Parlour and Town Council offices.

Parish information

Parish*	Chard
Parish Population	13,074
No. of dwellings	6,066

*Taken from the 2011 census profile

The project

The project is to install air-conditioning in the Auditorium of the Guildhall to help control the room temperature, especially during warm periods, when there are large audiences in attendance. The Guildhall is of strategic importance to the Town. The Auditorium is the largest hireable space in the Guildhall and has been used for a range of events including theatrical productions, band nights, ceremonies and conferences. In recent times, it has also been used as a Covid testing station and vaccination centre.

Currently the Auditorium has a ventilation system that draws in outside air, which results in the inside temperature mirroring that outside, so it's cold in winter and



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warm/hot in summer. This can make it very uncomfortable for performers and audiences using the Auditorium. In the spirit of seeking to improve ventilation in public spaces to support/promote safer interaction, as well as our plans to offer more events in the Auditorium, a well-maintained air-conditioning system will provide an asset to this public space.

The Auditorium is also used in emergencies, such as flooding, when evacuations take place. With provision of air-conditioning, its use as an emergency centre can be extended to provide a place of comfort in heatwaves as well.

Local support / evidence of need

Users of the Auditorium from Chard and the surrounding areas, including performers, audiences and event attendees, will benefit from a fresher, more comfortable temperature-controlled environment, where air quality is regularly renewed and microscopic pollutants are reduced. The improved environment should also make the Auditorium a more attractive venue for hirers who run events and allow more flexibility, especially in the event of emergency situations.

Project costs

Project costs	Cost £
To supply and install 6 internal air conditioning units, pipes, cables & drainage with outside cooling units	£25,400
Total	£25,400

Funding plan

Funding source	Secured or pending	Amount £
Parish/Town Council	Secured	£6,297
Opening Up Safely & Reconnecting Communities Fund - Somerset County Council	Secured	£2,500
S106	Secured	£11,603
SSDC Community Grant	Pending	£5,000
Total		£25,400

Conclusion and Recommendation

It is recommended that a grant of £5,000 is awarded.

Financial Implications

The balance in the Area West Capital programme is £31,967.08. If the recommended grant of £5,000 is awarded, £26,967.08 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



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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

Environment – Priority 1

To accelerate action to adapt to and mitigate the effects of climate change which includes reducing the Carbon footprint of the authority and enhancing the natural environment.

To keep South Somerset clean, green and attractive and respond to the climate and ecological emergency we will work in partnership to:

- 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
- Protect South Somerset's landscape and to seek to increase tree cover within our communities
- Deliver the County wide Climate Emergency Strategy
- Deliver low carbon transport options including walking, cycling and electric mobility across South Somerset
- Support the development of environmental and ecological aspects within local, parish and neighbourhood plans, promoting Nature Recovery Networks across the district

Economy and Covid-19 Recovery – Priority 3

To assist businesses to recover from the Covid-19 pandemic whilst supporting growth within the South Somerset economy in partnership with other organisations

- Support individuals and businesses through the pandemic, including response, recovery and growth initiatives (including any new grant schemes in the new financial year)
- Continue to deliver and prepare for Local Government Reorganisation transition, with other key stakeholders, the '8 point Enterprise, Innovation and Skills Action Plan'
- Work with commercial providers and public sector programmes to increase digital connectivity and associated skills throughout the district
- Enable and encourage businesses to become more environmentally sustainable (aligned to 2030 Climate Emergency commitments)
- Support the 'Bus Service Improvement Plan' particularly to promote Digital Demand Responsive Transport

Carbon Emissions and Climate Change Implications

None.



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 Hall is fully accessible and provides a meeting space for a wide range of groups. Installation of an air conditioning system will not have any negative impacts on citizens sharing any Protected Characteristics but could deliver positive impacts by creating a more comfortable and usable public space.	

Background Papers

None



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.

Special conditions

For example where an applicant has not provided all necessary information in the application and you are happy to wait for it eg access review; planning permissions. Or where some further encouragement could be given to do X or Y in future. Or to secure a definite outcome in the long term should the project fold, perhaps where land or buildings are concerned.