

## **Request for a Community Grant (Executive Decision)**

*Strategic Director:* Rina Singh (Place and Performance)  
*Assistant Director:* Helen Rutter (Communities)  
*Service Manager:* Andrew Gillespie, Area Development Manager (West)  
*Lead Officer:* Paul Philpott, Neighbourhood Development Officer  
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### **Purpose of the Report**

To consider one application for financial assistance from the Area West Community Grant Scheme. Combe St Nicholas Village Hall Committee have replaced outdated toilet facilities within the hall.

### **Public Interest**

This report considers one application made under the Area West Community Grant Scheme. This Scheme was established to assist local communities to bring forward projects that benefit their town or village.

### **Recommendation**

1. That members approve the following grant:

<b>Applicant</b>	<b>Project</b>	<b>Grant requested</b>
<b>Combe St Nicholas Village Hall Committee</b>	Replacement of toilet fittings and flooring.	£4,530.36

2. That the award is made subject to normal grant conditions apart from grant policy 10 (retrospective support) which members are requested to set aside.

### **Combe St Nicholas Village Hall**

#### **Background**

The village hall has hosted a wide variety of clubs and societies since 1987, providing the opportunity for children and adults to access activities and classes close to home. The hall also provides a facility which is well used by individuals and groups from outside of the village.

The Area West Committee of January 2012 awarded a grant towards replacement of the hall kitchen which by then was no longer fit for purpose. The resulting improvement to the facilities has led to a significant increase in hall bookings and permitted provision of the now established and successful Combe Café which opens every Wednesday and provides Sunday lunch menus on the last Sunday of each month.

The success of the kitchen and increased footfall within the hall raised a further challenge. The toilet facilities proved inadequate and the disabled toilet facility no longer conformed to modern standards.

The new design incorporates both a specialised disabled unit and a baby changing facility which will make the hall a more inclusive provider within the community.

This project also offers a much more attractive venue for larger user groups such as wedding receptions and parties who until now travelled elsewhere. An anticipated increase in bookings will also contribute towards the long term financial viability of the hall.

There are two considerations to note with this application. SSDC grant policy guidelines require a gap of three years before a subsequent grant can be awarded to the same project. The Neighbourhood Development Officer has taken the view that whilst both the kitchen and the toilet replacement projects are within the village hall, they are distinct from each other.

The second consideration is that if a grant is awarded it will be retrospective. The hall committee made the decision to proceed for two reasons. They took advice from the contractor that there would be a substantial delay unless work could start immediately and the National Lottery Awards for All required the project to start within three months of the grant offer which was dated 1<sup>st</sup> August 2014.

The grant application to SSDC was received on the 2nd September and the additional information requested was received on the 10th October. Works began on the 22<sup>nd</sup> September and were completed during the week of 24<sup>th</sup> October.

The grant awarded in 2012 towards the kitchen refurbishment was £8,500. If this grant request is approved it will take the total awarded in this period to £13,030.36.

SSDC grant policy sets a maximum award per project of £12,500. The Neighbourhood Development Officer has taken the view that the two projects are distinct and the grant if approved will therefore be within the financial limit of the scheme.

There is also an existing precedent to consider a retrospective application. In August 2013 Area West Committee approved a grant towards the Merriott sports pavilion project.

The financial accounts for the hall committee show annual running costs of circa £7,500. The October 2014 accounts showed a balance of £1,587.35. It is normally thought prudent for a community organisation of this sort to maintain a reserve equivalent to twelve months running costs.

## **Project Description**

The existing ladies toilet has been removed and the space restructured to install a newly designed facility comprising two toilets, one of which incorporates disabled access and baby changing facilities. The lack of easily accessible and reliable hot water provision has also been addressed. The project works have now been completed.

## **Project costs**

Quotes were obtained and the total cost for this project was £21,230.36.

Table 1:

Labour and materials	£17,765.36
Electrical work	£2,400
Flooring	£1,065
<b>Total Project Cost</b>	<b>£21,230.36</b>

## Funding

The hall committee have raised £5,000 towards this project with a further £500 raised by the Gala Association and £200 raised by CSN Local Ladies. The committee received £1,000 from the Parish Council and have secured a further £10,000 from the Big Lottery Fund, Awards for All.

Table 2:

<b>Funding Source</b>		
Own Funds	£5,000	Secured
Parish Council	£1,000	Secured
Awards For All	£10,000	Secured
Gala Association	£500	Secured
CSN Local Ladies	£200	Secured
SSDC	£4,530.36	Pending
<b>Total Project Cost</b>		<b>£21,230.36</b>

## Assessment

Table 3:

<b>Category</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Maximum score</b>
Eligibility	Y	
Target Groups	5	7
Project	4	5
Capacity of Organisation	11	15
Financial need	6	7
Innovation	1	3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>37</b>

The Neighbourhood Development Officer has assessed the application and the project has reached an overall score of 27 as outlined in the table above. This application exceeds the minimum score required for funding to be considered.

## Recommendation

The Neighbourhood Development Officer recommends that the grant be awarded in full.

## Council Plan Implications

Focus Four: Health and Communities – We want communities that are healthy, self reliant and have individuals who are willing to help each other.

## Carbon Emissions & Climate Change Implications

Improvements to the hall facilities may reduce car travel outside of the village.

## Equality and Diversity Implications

South West Disability Forum have advised the hall committee on the design of this project.

## **Financial Implications**

A grant of £4,530.36 can be awarded from the Area West capital programme. This would reduce the unallocated balance from £99,242 to £94,711.64.

### ***Background Papers:***

*([www.southsomerset.gov.uk/communities/funding-for-your-group-or-project](http://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/communities/funding-for-your-group-or-project))*

*Area West Committee January 2012*

*Area West Committee August 2013*

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