



Southern Area Committee

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REPORT

Wiltshire Village Halls Grants Scheme applications 05/06

Summary

Morgans Vale and Woodfalls village hall has applied for funding for the 2005/06 financial period under the Wiltshire Village Halls Grants Programme. Under this scheme Wiltshire County Council provide up to 50% of project costs, district councils provide 20% and the village halls committees are encouraged to raise 30%. It is recommended that the Southern Area approve 'In principal' the applications, and agree IN PRINCIPLE the sum of £5,143 from the 05/06 budget. This will enable both projects to be considered for approval and funding at the final meeting of Village Halls Grants Panel on March 14th 2005.

Background to the scheme

Wiltshire is one of the only counties in the south-west that offers a life-line to rural communities in the form of capital grants for new village halls or halls in need of extension or refurbishment. This is very important for the predominantly rural Salisbury District, as village halls can be the hub of village life, providing venues for village meetings, classes and clubs. The grant is run by Community First, and works along the following lines:

- 1) Village Halls committees within Wiltshire apply to the Wiltshire Village Halls Grants Scheme by 1st July each year for major capital projects costing more than £5,000.
- 2) As the money offered by Wiltshire County Council is limited at around £57,000 the scheme is competitive. The Village Halls Grants Panel meets in October to consider the applications in terms of:
 - 1) Project costs
 - 2) Whether other funding sources are in place*
 - 3) The urgency of the project
 - 4) Local need for the project
- 3) Between October-March, District Councils must agree in principle their portion of the funding. The village hall committees have this time to ensure their portion of the funding is in place.
- 4) In March, the final approval for the projects is made by the Village Halls Grants Panel – as the scheme is competitive, not all projects from a particular area may be approved.
- 5) During the summer months Community First visit village halls and give expert advice on potential applications to the scheme, financial management of halls, administration and any other issues.

* Under this scheme, Wiltshire County Council funds each project on a 5:2:3 ratio - e.g. Wiltshire County Council contributes 50% of project costs, district councils contribute 20%, and the village hall committee must find around 30% or more. Where the maximum amount of money has not been applied for, the ratio may vary, but will always remain 5:2 between WCC and SDC.

Because the village halls applications must be considered on merit rather than by location, the amount of village halls applying for funding from each District Council and each Area Committee is not predictable and can vary considerably year on year. It is therefore difficult to budget for Village Halls projects. Some district councils

have allocated a specific annual budget for Village halls, whereas Salisbury decided to use the SWAG system. Procedures were confirmed with Area Committees in 2003.

Details of the application/s

	Morgans Vale and Woodfalls
Cost of scheme	£40,275.27
Local contribution raised	£10,841 so far, £11,434 still to go
WCC contribution requested	£12,857
SDC contribution requested	£5,143
SDC contribution: % of costs	13%
Brief outline of project	Replace existing toilet block with new disabled access toilet (including baby changing, a ladies, and cleaners sink and store), convert cloakroom to storage facility. The hall is central to the village and is used on a weekly basis by many groups.

This is the 3rd application from this hall to the grants scheme. The original project had to be down-scaled following an unsuccessful application to the Lottery Fund

NB: Two village halls from the Western Area (Hindon and Maiden Bradley) have also applied to the scheme.

SDC involvement

The Village Halls Grants Panel is run by Community First, who employs a specialist full-time Village Halls Advisor. One Member and one Officer from each local authority (including Wiltshire) sit on the Village Halls Panel. Salisbury is well represented on the panel. The current Member for Salisbury is Cllr. C. Mills, and the Member for Wiltshire is Cllr. A. Peach.

Implications

- 1) **Financial:** The Southern Area is requested to allocate IN PRINCIPLE £5,143.00 from the SWAG or discretionary budget for the scheme, should it be successful in March. This sum represents 13% of true cost of the schemes (e.g £1 given by SDC will be matched by WCC and the village halls by £6.70), demonstrating that the scheme is good value for money.
- 2) **Personnel:** None
- 3) **Human Rights:** The project will help the hall to comply with new disability access legislation.
- 4) **Community safety:** Village halls provide a legitimate place for groups of young people to meet, a focus for the village, and also a place for village representatives to meet to discuss local issues such as community safety.
- 5) **Legal:** None
- 6) **Wards affected:** Downton and Redlynch

Recommendations

That the Southern Area :

- 1) Approves in principle the application from Morgans Vale and Woodfalls
- 2) Agrees in principle to allocate £5,143 from the 05/06 budget to ensure that the project can be put forward to the March Grants Panel for potential approval.