

Community Initiatives

SDC Council Offices

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Report

Report subject: Village Hall Grants Scheme Applications 07/08

Report to: Western Area Committee

Date: 26 October 2006

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Summary

Fovant village hall has applied for funding for the 2007/08 financial period under the Wiltshire Village Halls Capital Grants Programme. Under this scheme Wiltshire County Council provide up to 50% of project costs, district councils provide 20% and the village halls committees must raise 30%. It is recommended that the Western Area approve 'In principal' the applications, and agree IN PRINCIPLE the sum of £857 from the 07/08 budget. This will enable both projects to be considered for approval and funding at the final meeting of Village Halls Grants Panel on March 2007.

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 village hall 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.
- 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.



Awarded in:



*Under this scheme, Wiltshire County Council funds 50% of each project, the village hall committee must find at least 30%, and the relevant district councils fund 20% of the project.

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 SWAG monies. Procedures were confirmed with Area Committees in 2003.

Details of the applications

	Fovant
Cost of scheme	£8,000
Amount Requested	£5,600
Amount proposed	£3,000
Local contribution raised	Other funding in place and being applied for
WCC contribution	£2,143
SDC contribution	£857
What is it for?	Rearrangement and refurbishment of toilets to provide disabled access

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 represented on the panel. The current Member for Salisbury is Cllr. C. Mills.

Recommendations

That the Western Area :

- 1) Approves in principle the application from Fovant
- 2) Agrees in principle to allocate £857 from the 07/08 budget to ensure that the projects can be put forward to the March 07 Village Hall Grants Panel for potential approval.

Implications

Financial:	The Western Area is requested to allocate IN PRINCIPLE £857 from the SWAG budget for the scheme, should it be successful in March.
Legal:	None
Human Rights	None
Personnel:	None.
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.
Environmental implications:	None
ICT:	None
Council's Core Values :	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting Local needs especially those that are disadvantaged • Working together with other public, private and voluntary sector organisations to develop a better sustainable district
Wards Affected:	Tisbury & Fovant