

Applicant: Peachcroft Christian Centre, Abingdon

Background

At the Abingdon Area Committee meeting held on 12 January 2005, an application was heard from Peachcroft Christian Centre, Abingdon seeking a grant towards the cost of extending its existing centre in Lindsay Drive, North Abingdon. The Committee indicated that it was minded to support the application in the sum of £50,000 but noted that there were limited resources available. To this end it was considered that the application should be deferred to the next financial year for reconsideration by the Committee and that the application should be referred to the Executive, it being noted that the Executive could award capital grants or make loans.

On 4th March 2005 Executive considered report 234/04 and resolved 'that loans be made available to community groups, which on application, must satisfy the authority that it can cover any risks associated with the loan' The applicant has been advised of this resolution and the content of report 234/04. The applicant's response is that their preference would be for a grant rather than a loan towards the cost of their project because they are already funding a large part of the project with loans.

The application for £50,000 was considered by the Executive Grants Committee on 15 April. The Executive resolved that the Abingdon Area Committee be encouraged to provide financial support, such award to at least match the grant to be recommended to the Council, and to recommend to the Council the creation of a new capital scheme to award £10,000 to the Peachcroft Christian Centre subject to the Abingdon Area Committee providing equivalent revenue funding. The recommendation was adopted by the Council at its meeting on 18 May.

Outline of Project

Peachcroft Christian Centre (Centre) is seeking a grant towards the cost of extending its existing Centre in Lindsay Drive, North Abingdon. Since the Centre was built in 1987 the Peachcroft housing estate has grown to over 2,000 houses with approximately 6,000 people. The centre is currently a one-roomed building seating 60; hence it is far too small for the needs of the Peachcroft estate. Working with the marginalized, at risk youth of North Abingdon, the size of their current premises severely limits the effectiveness, scope and diversity of what can be achieved. The congregation of over 50 adults and 30 children and young people has also completely outgrown the capacity of the building. Limited floor space, storage space, toilet and kitchen facilities greatly restrict the use that can be made of the Centre by both the congregation and the community at large. The Centre is a focal point for many local community groups, including parent and toddler groups, over 55's club, holiday clubs, Women's Institute, Abingdon Music Centre and a youth café (run by the centre for local teenagers). In consultation with the community, the police, town and district Councillors and youth professionals, the Centre is playing a leading role in the development of work with the marginalized, at risk youth of North Abingdon.

They have surveyed 100 local households to ensure that their extension and the services which it will offer are needed and will be used by the local community. The proposed extension plans include a flexible large main hall to seat 150 (with overflow capacity) which could be divided into several smaller spaces if required. This will serve as a worship area for Sunday services, but will also be used for numerous community functions throughout the week. In addition there will be a crèche, improved office and kitchen areas, a larger toilet block and a separate quiet room, all totally accessible to people with a disability.

The land is owned by Radley College, leased to Peachcroft Christian Centre on a peppercorn lease for a period of 125 years from 1985. Radley College has given written consent to their extension project.

Planning permission has been granted by the District Council

Financial Information:

Total Project Cost	£572,016 including VAT
Balances	£12,771 at 31 August 2003
Running Costs	£37,407 for year ended 31 August 2003
Own Contribution	£263,000
Grant Sought	£50,000
Previous Awards	None in last 5 years
Parish Support	Abingdon Town Council awarded £500
Other Support	Waste Recycling Environment Limited (WREN) awarded £ 30,000 Applied to many other trusts (awaiting outcomes)