

Wantage Area Committee



Report of Communication and Grants Manager

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To: Wantage area committee

DATE: 17 July 2017



New Homes Bonus and Capital Grants (round one) 2017/18

Recommendations

- (a) that the Wantage area committee considers the one application for a New Homes Bonus (NHB) grant and makes an award in line with the approved policy (updated March 2017).
- (b) that the Wantage area committee considers the two applications for capital grants and makes awards in line with the approved policy (updated March 2017).

Purpose of report

1. To give the committee the information needed to award New Homes Bonus (NHB) and capital grants for their area.

Strategic objectives

2. Under the 'sustainable communities and well-being' corporate priority in our 2016-2020 corporate plan we have committed to support community groups through our grants schemes.

Background

3. We opened both schemes from 1 April to 15 May 2017.
4. The Wantage area received one eligible NHB application requesting £1,477 against a budget of £44,694 and two eligible capital grant applications requesting a total of £9,750 against its budget of £28,810.
5. Officers have evaluated the applications using the scoring matrices in the agreed policies, updated in March 2017. See appendix one for the NHB evaluation, appendix two for a breakdown of new homes by parish and appendix three for the capital grant evaluations.

6. In line with the policies, officers have suggested scores and awards for the projects for the committee to consider and amend as necessary. The scores dictate the level of funding the committee can award.

Financial implications

7. In February 2017 the council set a 2017/18 NHB budget of £100,000. As per the policy the Wantage area committee was allocated 44.694 per cent of the 2017/18 NHB budget (£44,694). As per the agreed policy these grants can fund either one-off revenue or capital projects.
8. At the same meeting, the council set a 2017/18 capital grants budget of £100,000 for capital grants. As per the policy, the Wantage area committee receives 28.81 per cent of this (£28,810) to award in capital grants during 2017/18.

Legal implications

9. The council's legal powers to award these grants are contained in section one of the Localism Act 2011 that gives a general power of competence for local authorities.
10. In May 2017 full council delegated authority to three area committees to determine NHB and capital grant applications, within the parameters of each grant policy.

Risks

11. There are no overarching risks of awarding these grants. Officers have highlighted any risks to a particular project in their evaluation reports.

Conclusion

12. That the committee awards NHB and capital grants in line with the approved policies.

Background papers

Cabinet approval of the new homes bonus and capital grant policies (updated March 2017).

Appendix one - 2017-18 new homes bonus grants - officer evaluation

| Ref no. | Organisation | Scheme | Scheme cost | Amount requested | % of cost requested | Suggested score | Suggested award % | Suggested maximum amount |
|--------------|-----------------------|---|--------------|------------------|---------------------|-----------------|----------------------|--------------------------|
| VNHB17-18/11 | Grove District Guides | Replacement (and new) camping equipment | £2,955 | £1,477 | 49.98% | 7 | 37.50% of total cost | £1,108 |
| | | | TOTAL | £1,477 | | | Total | £1,108 |
| | | | | | | | Budget | £44,694 |
| | | | | | | | Balance | £43,586 |

Priority levels and award allowances

| Score | Priority Level | Permitted Awards all awards subject to there being sufficient budget |
|-------------|-----------------|---|
| 9-12 points | High priority | Award up to the full amount requested - budget permitting (capped at 50 per cent of the cost) |
| 5-8 points | Medium priority | Award 50%-75% of the amount requested, depending on their score and available budget |
| 0-4 points | Low priority | No funding |

Scoring matrix

New Homes Allocation (officers will combine the score if the project clearly benefits more than one parish)

| Points | Criteria to score |
|----------|---|
| 0 | None of the area's additional homes were in the parish(s) where the project takes place |
| 1 | 1 – 10% of the area's additional homes were in the parish(s) where the project takes place |
| 2 | 11 - 50% of the area's additional homes were in the parish(s) where the project takes place |
| 3 | 51 or more % of the area's additional homes were in the parish(s) where the project takes place |

Community Benefit

| Points | Criteria to score | Example |
|----------|--|---|
| 0 | The project offers little or no direct benefit to the community. | A decorative sign or boundary wall with no other purpose. |
| 1 | A single sport or special interest group will benefit. However, if a sport club wanted to upgrade their pavilion and other groups frequently use it as well, it can score more. | A project to buy cricket pitch covers, IT equipment for a photography club or landscaping a nursery's garden is only benefiting their members/users. |
| 2 | Two or more specific groups will benefit. The project will have a significant impact on the health or wellbeing of one group. | A football club is upgrading its changing rooms, which a hockey club also uses. Specialist equipment for a centre working with severely disabled people. |

| | | |
|-------------------|--|--|
| 3 | <p>The project provides a facility that is available to anyone not just members.</p> <p>Limit the maximum score for projects on sites owned by religious organisations to two points, as they can limit who can access them under special rules in the Equalities Act.</p> | <p>Play areas, community buildings or recreation grounds.</p> <p>(e.g. a church hall or Islamic centre)</p> |
| Deductions | <p>Remove at least one point if the project will reduce an existing benefit to the community without replacing it (two points if it totally removes it).</p> <p>Remove one point if there are concerns over the ownership/lease of the property.</p> | <p>Replacing a recreation ground with tennis courts for a member's only club (the open community benefit is reduced to tennis club members only).</p> <p>The term of their lease is too short or their ownership evidence is unreliable.</p> |

Extra facilities/activities

| Points | Criteria to score | Examples |
|-------------------|--|---|
| 0 | The project doesn't allow any activities to take place or provide a facility for the community's use. | A decorative village sign doesn't allow any community activities to take place or give the community a facility to use. |
| 1 | <p>The project replaces existing facilities or allows existing activities to continue.</p> <p>or</p> <p>The project moderately improves a minor community facility or activity.</p> | <p>It replaces furniture in the village hall with like-for-like replacements.</p> <p>Replacing existing park benches with longer-lasting ones.</p> |
| 2 | <p>The project moderately improves or extends a substantial community facility or activity.</p> <p>or</p> <p>The project significantly improves or extends a minor community facility or activity.</p> <p>or</p> <p>The project provides a new minor facility or activity for the community.</p> | <p>Replacing the chairs in the village hall with more comfortable ones.</p> <p>Buying replacement boats for a small canoeing club.</p> <p>Installing three new noticeboards in the village.</p> |
| 3 | <p>The project will provide substantial new facilities or activities to the community.</p> <p>or</p> <p>The project significantly improves a substantial community facility.</p> | <p>Installing a brand new play area.</p> <p>Adding a large extension to the village hall.</p> |
| Deductions | <p>Deduct one point if the project reduces the community activities/facilities on offer.</p> <p>Deduct two points if the project removes a community facility or</p> | <p>A project to overhaul and landscape a car park that reduces the number of parking spaces.</p> <p>Demolishing an old skate park without replacing it with anything.</p> |

| | | |
|--|---|--|
| | stops activities taking place without replacing them. | |
|--|---|--|

Finance

| Points | Financial overview |
|-------------------|--|
| 0 | They don't have a plan of how they'll fund the rest of the project and haven't secured any other funding yet. They haven't given details of how they'll fund the ongoing maintenance and eventual replacements. |
| 1 | They've got a funding plan, but haven't applied for all of the funding yet. or They've applied for all the other funding needed, but have secured less than 50 per cent so far. They've budgeted for the ongoing maintenance but don't say how they'll fund eventual replacements in the future (if applicable). |
| 2 | They've applied for all the funding needed and have already secured over 50 per cent of the balance. They've budgeted for the ongoing costs and have a general idea how they'll fund replacements eventually (if applicable) |
| 3 | They've secured all the other funding needed for the project already (including if they're funding the rest themselves). or The organisation has requested 100 per cent of the cost and have provided evidence that they've lost a funder, can't raise money themselves (e.g. via precept) and can't apply for other grants/funding. They've budgeted for the ongoing costs and have a fund/account/pot saving for the replacements in due course. |
| Deductions | Remove one point if the organisation's finances suggest they could contribute towards the cost but aren't, remove two points if they can afford the whole project without any funding. |

Other potential deductions/considerations:

- Their chosen supplier doesn't appear to offer value for money (their other quote was significantly cheaper for the same work).
- They have only provided one quote stating there is no alternative, but officers have found otherwise.
- Their start dates are too soon to work with our decision-making timeline for the scheme, unless we gave them permission to make an exceptional application before submitting their application.
- They are doing lots of small, similar projects instead of doing all the work in one go, which would be more cost effective.
- The community don't support the project or would prefer a different solution.

| | | |
|---|------------|--------------|
| Grove District Guides | Ref | VNHB17-18/11 |
| Replacement (and new) camping equipment | | |

| | | |
|------------------------------------|--------|--|
| Total project cost | £2,955 | |
| Amount requested | £1,477 | Percentage of total cost requested: 49.98% |
| Organisation's contribution | £436 | Organisation's latest bank balance £1,710 |
| Other funding | £1,042 | All outstanding fundraising |

Previous grants

None

Scoring

| | | |
|---|------------------------|--|
| % of additional occupied homes in the parish where the project will take place? | | |
| The group covers Grove (26.96 per cent), East Hanney (6.84 per cent) and West Hanney (2.21 per cent). The combined total for the three areas is 36.01 per cent. | Score | 2/3 |
| New facilities or activities | | |
| This project will replace some existing camping equipment and purchase two new tents. As this is a mix of replacing existing facilities and new facilities on a small-scale officer have suggested a mid-way score of 2 points. | Score | 2/3 |
| Community benefit | | |
| The various guiding groups (brownies, guides, rainbows) will benefit when on camping trips, as this is a single sex, age limited group. | Score | 1/3 |
| They may loan the items to other youth groups, but as this is not guaranteed officers have limited the score to that for a single group. | | |
| Funding the project | | |
| They have their contribution of £436 in their reserves and are still fundraising for the balance. | Score | 2/3 |
| Consultation | | |
| There was no evidence of consultation to confirm the need for this purchase, however they are aware of a general increase in the local population which may result in additional membership to their group. | | |
| Project completion within timeframe | | |
| The originally planned to purchase the equipment in August 2017, which works with our decision dates and grant term. However, they are keen to purchase the items in July as their summer camp is this month. The purchase date must be after 17 July to avoid it becoming a retrospective request. | | |
| OFFICER CONCERNS AND COMMENTS | Total score | 7/12 |
| | Suggested grant | 37.50% of the total cost, capped to £1,108 |

Applicant responses

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| Details of the project | I am applying for money to renew/replace camping equipment for Guides in Grove and Hanney. In addition we would like to purchase a couple of new 4-person tents specifically for smaller groups of older guides or young leaders which will give them more space. |
| Financial statement from the organisation | International Account of £414.74 restricted for international trips. District Account of £802.54 is restricted for District expenses including leader training and annual census. Camps Account £55.34 is saved towards next year's equipment insurance. |
| Statement about town/parish support | Parish Council not yet approached and we were unaware we could approach them for grants. |
| Community benefit | |
| Who will benefit from your project? | Rainbow, Brownie and Guide units in Grove and Hanney. Which are part of Girl guiding UK which is a youth organisation for girls aged 5-18. There are currently about 180 girls in Grove and Hanney who are members. We could potentially share our equipment with other local Youth groups e.g. Scouts, Church groups or First Responders. We are open to being approached to borrow our equipment by other local groups. |
| How did you identify a need in the community for your project or service? | We are aware of the proposed increased housing in Grove, which we anticipate will grow our membership. Guiding in Grove and Hanney has increased over the past few years, and we re-opened Hanney Brownies as a result of this in 2013. We recognise that there is a continued need for Youth Activities in Grove and Hanney. |
| What sustainable and/or energy saving measures does your project include or offer? | N/A |
| Consultation | |
| What consultation have you carried out with the community or professional advisors? | N/A |
| New facilities/Activities | |
| What extra facilities (or equipment) will the project provide? | This project will offer better facilities for the Guide Units when camping, and equipment for the District for outdoor events which is currently not available. |
| What new activities will take place because of this project? | More camping equipment will enable us to take more Guides away. With the planned housing growth in Grove we anticipate more members over the next few years. New equipment for the District will enable Brownie and Rainbow Units to offer more outdoor activities for the girls. |

Appendix two – breakdown of area’s total increase in homes by parish

| Area committee | Parish/town | 2016 total occupied homes | 2015 total occupied homes | Total parish increase in year | Percentage of area's total increase |
|----------------|------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Wantage | Ardington and Lockinge | 220 | 220 | 0 | 0.00% |
| Wantage | Blewbury | 782 | 779 | 3 | 0.60% |
| Wantage | Childrey | 224 | 224 | 0 | 0.00% |
| Wantage | Chilton | 646 | 643 | 3 | 0.60% |
| Wantage | Denchworth | 80 | 79 | 1 | 0.20% |
| Wantage | East Challow | 399 | 377 | 22 | 4.43% |
| Wantage | East Hanney | 397 | 363 | 34 | 6.84% |
| Wantage | East Hendred | 521 | 501 | 20 | 4.02% |
| Wantage | Grove | 3,144 | 3,010 | 134 | 26.96% |
| Wantage | Harwell | 1,252 | 1,103 | 149 | 29.98% |
| Wantage | Kingston Lisle | 107 | 104 | 3 | 0.60% |
| Wantage | Letcombe Basset | 76 | 75 | 1 | 0.20% |
| Wantage | Letcombe Regis | 380 | 379 | 1 | 3.70% |
| Wantage | Milton | 496 | 469 | 27 | 0.20% |
| Wantage | Sparsholt | 138 | 137 | 1 | 0.20% |
| Wantage | Steventon | 752 | 684 | 68 | 13.68% |
| Wantage | Upton | 176 | 178 | -2 | -0.40% |
| Wantage | Wantage | 5,189 | 5,170 | 19 | 3.82% |
| Wantage | West Challow | 88 | 87 | 1 | 0.20% |
| Wantage | West Hanney | 236 | 225 | 11 | 2.21% |
| Wantage | West Hendred | 149 | 148 | 1 | 0.20% |
| | Total | 15,452 | 14,955 | 497 | |

Appendix three 2017-18 capital grants officer evaluations and scoring summary

| Ref no. | Organisation | Scheme | Scheme cost | Amount requested | % of cost requested | Suggested score | Suggested award % | Suggested maximum amount |
|--------------|--------------------------|--|--------------|------------------|---------------------|-----------------|-------------------|--------------------------|
| VCap17-18/23 | Hanney War Memorial Hall | Install new and additional roof insulation | £13,500 | £6,750 | 50.00% | 8 | 50.00% | £6,750 |
| VCap17-18/17 | Harwell Village CIO | Soft landscaping around the village hall | £6,000 | £3,000 | 50.00% | 4 | 37.50% | £2,250 |
| | | | TOTAL | £9,750 | | | Total | £9,000 |
| | | | | | | | Budget | £28,810 |
| | | | | | | | Balance | £19,810 |

Priority levels and award allowances

| Score | Priority Level | Permitted Awards all awards subject to there being sufficient budget |
|------------|-----------------|---|
| 7-9 points | High priority | Award up to the full amount requested - budget permitting (capped at 50 per cent of the cost) |
| 4-6 points | Medium priority | Award 50%-75% of the amount requested, depending on their score and available budget |
| 0-3 points | Low priority | No funding |

Scoring matrix

Community Benefit

| Points | Criteria to score | Example |
|--------|---|---|
| 0 | The project offers little or no direct benefit to the community. | A decorative sign or boundary wall with no other purpose |
| 1 | A single sport or special interest group, like an art group, will benefit. However, if a sport club wanted to upgrade their pavilion and other groups frequently use it as well, it can score more. | A project to buy cricket pitch covers, IT equipment for a photography club or landscaping a nursery's garden is only benefiting their members/users. |
| 2 | Two or more specific groups will benefit. The project will have a significant impact on the health or wellbeing of one group | A football club is upgrading its changing rooms, which a hockey club also uses. Specialist equipment for a centre working with severely disabled people. |
| 3 | The project provides a facility that is available to anyone not just members. Limit the maximum score for projects on sites owned by religious organisations to two points, as they can limit who can access them under special rules in the Equalities Act. | Play areas, community building or recreation ground. (e.g. a church hall or Islamic centre) |

| | | |
|-------------------|--|---|
| Deductions | Remove at least one point if the project will reduce an existing benefit to the community without replacing it (two points if it totally removes). | Replacing a recreation ground with tennis courts for a member's club (open community benefit is reduced to tennis club members only). |
| | Remove one point if there are concerns over the ownership/lease of the property. | The term of their lease is too short or their ownership evidence is unreliable. |

Extra facilities/activities

| Points | Criteria to score | Examples |
|-------------------|---|--|
| 0 | The project doesn't allow any activities to take place or provide a facility for the community's use. | A decorative village sign doesn't allow any community activities to take place or give the community a facility to use. |
| 1 | The project replaces existing facilities or allows existing activities to continue. or The project moderately improves a minor community facility or activity. | It replaces furniture in the village hall with like-for-like replacements. Replacing existing park benches with longer-lasting ones. |
| 2 | The project moderately improves or extends a substantial community facility or activity. or The project significantly improves or extends a minor community facility or activity. or The project provides a new minor facility or activity for the community. | Replacing the chairs in the village hall with more comfortable ones. Buying replacement boats for a small canoeing club. Installing three new noticeboards in the village. |
| 3 | The project will provide substantial new facilities or activities to the community. or The project significantly improves a substantial community facility. | Installing a brand new play area. Adding a large extension to the village hall. |
| Deductions | Deduct one point if the project reduces the community activities/facilities on offer. Deduct two points if the project removes a community facility or stops activities taking place without replacing them. | Like a project to overhaul and landscape a car park that reduces the number of parking spaces. Demolishing an old skate park without replacing it with anything. |

Finance

| Points | Financial overview |
|-------------------|--|
| 0 | <p>They don't have a plan of how they'll fund the rest of the project and haven't secured any other funding yet.</p> <p>They haven't given details of how they'll fund the ongoing maintenance and eventual replacements.</p> |
| 1 | <p>They've got a funding plan, but haven't applied for all of it yet.</p> <p>or</p> <p>They've applied for all the other funding needed, but have secured less than 50 per cent so far.</p> <p>They've budgeted for the ongoing maintenance but don't say how they'll fund eventual replacements in the future (if applicable).</p> |
| 2 | <p>They've applied for all the funding needed and have already secured over 50 per cent of the balance.</p> <p>They've budgeted for the ongoing costs and have a general idea how they'll fund replacements eventually (if applicable)</p> |
| 3 | <p>They've secured all the other funding needed for the project already (including if they're funding the rest themselves).</p> <p>or</p> <p>The organisations has requested 100 per cent of the cost and have provided evidence that they've lost a funder, can't raise money themselves (e.g. via precept) and can't apply for other grants/funding.</p> <p>They've budgeted for the ongoing costs and have a fund/account/pot saving for the replacements in due course.</p> |
| Deductions | <p>Remove one point if the organisation's finances suggest they could contribute towards the cost but aren't, remove two points if they can afford the whole project without any funding.</p> |

Other potential deductions/considerations:

- Their chosen supplier doesn't appear to offer value for money (their other quote was significantly cheaper for the same work).
- They have only provided one quote stating there is no alternative, but officers have found otherwise.
- Their start dates are too soon to work with our decision-making timeline for the scheme, unless we gave them permission to make an exceptional application before submitting their application.
- They are doing lots of small, similar projects instead of doing all the work in one go, which would be more cost effective.
- The community don't support the project or would prefer a different solution.

| | | |
|--|------------|--------------|
| Hanney War Memorial Hall | Ref | VCap17-18/23 |
| Install new and additional roof insulation | | |

| | | |
|------------------------------------|---------|--|
| Total project cost | £13,500 | |
| Amount requested | £6,750 | Percentage of total cost requested: 50.00% |
| Organisation's contribution | £6,750 | Organisation's latest bank balance £33,708 |

Previous grants

None

Scoring

| | | |
|--|------------------------|--|
| New facilities or activities | | |
| This project will improve the energy efficiency of the building by installing new and additional roof insulation. | Score | 2/3 |
| Community benefit | | |
| The whole community can benefit from the improvements, as the hall is available to anyone to access. The hall will be warmer for users and they can reinvest any savings on energy costs back into the hall. | Score | 3/3 |
| Funding the project | | |
| They are paying 50 per cent from their reserves and have not secured or applied for any other funding. Their bank balance at the time of application was £33,708 which includes their contribution for this project and £7,685 to cover other improvement work. This leaves them with £12,523 in their reserves. The parish council is their landlord and has consented to the work, although they are not contributing. | Score | 3/3 |
| Consultation | | |
| They have an energy audit (from 2013) that identified the need to improve the insulation in the building. | | |
| Project completion within timeframe | | |
| Their start date in August 2017 will work with our expected decision date and the 12-month grant term. | | |
| OFFICER CONCERNS AND COMMENTS | Total score | 8/9 |
| | Suggested grant | 50.00% of the total cost, capped to £6,750 |

Applicant responses

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|--|---|
| Details of the project | Over the last four years, the Operations Committee of Hanney War Memorial Hall have worked hard to improve the energy efficiency of our community hall to reduce the running costs and ensure the financial viability of this well used and vital hub of the communities of East and West Hanney. This project to install new and additional insulation beneath the felt roof sections of the building is the final energy improvement project. |
| Financial statement from the organisation | The Hall is committed to three other current building improvement projects in addition to this one; the replacement of guttering and downpipes with long life aluminium guttering (£3685), the repair of the tiled roof on the hall (£1000) and the creation of a new meeting area within the current building to cope with increased demand (£3000). These projects will be funded from our reserves and so we have applied for this grant for roof insulation. |
| Statement about town/parish support | We have notified our landlord, East Hanney Parish Council, of our planned project. The Hall has built up our reserves over the last four years to cover building improvement projects required due to the age of the building. This project is one of four current projects and the Council would expect the Hall to cover the costs of maintaining its own building from our own reserves. |
| Community benefit | |
| Who will benefit from your project? | The user groups that will benefit from the installation of the insulation are: OHR meeting room: Hanney Senior Citizens Groups, Wantage Bridge Club, Little Rainbows play group, Hanney Wine Circle, Hanney Guides, Hanney History Group, Hanney WI, Hanney Drama Group, Film Club and all occasional bookings using that room All users of the Hall using toilets and kitchen All users of the community shop |
| How did you identify a need in the community for your project or service? | The Hall is managed by a committee of trustees from all our regular user groups and they have endorsed and approved our building improvement projects to secure the integrity of the structure of the building for the future and improve the environment for their user groups. All proposed projects have been presented to the Management Committee and have been approved. |
| What sustainable and/or energy saving measures does your project include or offer? | Following an Energy Audit in 2013, all the suggested energy improvements were implemented including low energy lighting systems throughout the building, top-up loft insulation above the changing rooms, injected cavity wall insulation and spray foam insulation above the main hall. The only area that remains is providing additional insulation under the felt roof sections of the building and was excluded in the report as the roof would have to be replaced to fit the insulation. |
| Consultation | |
| What consultation have you carried out with the community or professional advisors? | The roof has been surveyed by three separate roofing companies who all confirmed that the felt roof required replacement as most of it was installed over 30 years ago. However, the Hall Operations Committee realised that the replacement of the roof would provide the opportunity to increase the insulation above the meeting room, shop, toilets and kitchen improving the room environment and only one contractor was prepared to give a professional estimate for the cost. |
| New facilities/Activities | |
| What extra facilities (or equipment) will the project provide? | The installation of new insulation above the ceiling of our second meeting room will not only save our energy costs but it will also make that space more attractive to users throughout the year. The roof is also above our community shop, kitchen and toilets providing a warmer environment to all users of the hall. The replacement of the felt roof will also ensure the structural integrity of the roof for another 30 years. |
| What new activities will take place because of this project? | The improvement to the insulation will not only benefit our existing users and groups but it will also make the building more attractive to new users. The demand from new hirers has been increasing over the last two years as other improvements have been made and we expect that demand to grow as a result of the environmental improvements this project will deliver. |

| | | |
|--|------------|--------------|
| Harwell Village CIO | Ref | VCap17-18/17 |
| Soft landscaping around the village hall | | |

| | | |
|------------------------------------|--------|---|
| Total project cost | £6,000 | |
| Amount requested | £3,000 | Percentage of total cost requested: 50.00% |
| Organisation's contribution | £3,000 | Organisation's latest bank balance £116,132 |

Previous grants

Current capital round – rejected £9,000 for a sliding room partition (we had already funded the work)
 2014/15 £15,000 main hall rebuild project (NHB)
 2014/15 £4,110 replacement hall toilets

Scoring

| | | |
|---|------------------------|--|
| New facilities or activities | | |
| The project will visually improve some outside areas, but it will not provide any usable facilities to the community or allow new activities to take place. The officer's score reflects the lack of new activities or facilities. | Score | 0/3 |
| Community benefit | | |
| While the project may make the outside space more attractive, this is a non-essential project that does not provide a tangible benefit to the community. The officer's score reflects the very limited tangible benefit. | Score | 1/3 |
| Funding the project | | |
| They are paying 50 per cent from their reserves and have not secured or applied for any other funding. It is not clear from what they've said about their 'other financial commitments' whether they require funding to complete this project. | Score | 3/3 |
| Consultation | | |
| They consulted the community on the hall redevelopment project in general and the landscaping was illustrated in the designs. They received positive comments. | | |
| Project completion within timeframe | | |
| Their delivery dates in September 2017 work with our expected decision date and the 12-month grant term for this scheme. | | |
| OFFICER CONCERNS AND COMMENTS | Total score | 4/9 |
| The design could have incorporated useful planting such as herbs, fruit or vegetables that the community could use. They could also have worked with the local school or possibly Restore (a charity working in Didcot offering gardening/landscaping training and activities to its users) to collaborate on the design, delivery and maintenance of the landscaping. This would increase the beneficiaries and potentially help reduce costs. | Suggested Grant | 37.50% of the total cost, capped to £2,250 |

Applicant responses

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| Details of the project | To complete the implementation of the soft landscaping of our village halls. There are planting areas in both carparks, a side bed and a walled community garden with patio. This work includes additional shrub planting, installation of an irrigation system, construction of post and wire fencing for new hedges and outdoor seating. There will also be a requirement for a grounds person to maintain and water the planting as it establishes. |
| Financial statement from the organisation | There are contractors bills, professional fees, 'snagging' lists, outstanding bills from capital items, loan repayments and utilities to pay. We expect to be £50,000 in arrears once these are paid, even after Section 106 money is received. We are obliged to keep £25,000 in our Development fund bank account as a condition of the Charitable loan. Although hire fees have increased, we now have two halls for hire meaning running costs have increased commensurately. |
| Statement about town/parish support | Our Parish Council have already been very supportive of the development of Harwell Village Halls and are committed to ensuring Section 106 money will be used to finish the project but this will not be until the end of the year. We have taken out a Charitable loan but this will need to be repaid and in order to complete and maintain the Halls we must supplement our fundraising by applying for grants. |
| Community benefit | |
| Who will benefit from your project? | All our Village residents and our user groups: Arts & Crafts, Ballet, Tap & Modern Dance, Irish Dancing, Fun Club for babies & Toddlers, Dippy Doo Music, Gardeners Club, Short Mat Bowls, WI, Karate, Pilates, Woodturners, Youth Club, History Group, Bounce fit, Yoga, Zumba and our Parish Council- (some 18 groups and growing) will benefit both from the visual impact of the soft landscaping and from the patio areas outside the hall. |
| How did you identify a need in the community for your project or service? | Considerable community consultation took place before we redeveloped the Village Halls. Plans for the carpark areas and planting beds were illustrations on our plans. Shrubs and two cherry trees at the front of the building caused great excitement with favourable comments from residents and users alike - particularly as Harwell is famed for its historic Cherry orchards. |
| What sustainable and/or energy saving measures does your project include or offer? | We are hoping to install a rainwater harvesting scheme for the maintenance of the soft landscaping as there is no external water tap. We have an extensive roof area for collection and a cellar that could be used for the tank, which can also be fed from mains water if there is a drought. We had a TOE2 Audit at the start of the project but this only dealt with the building itself. |
| Consultation | |
| What consultation have you carried out with the community or professional advisors? | The Landscape Architects at the start of the build drew up comprehensive plans for all the public areas around the halls but due to spiralling costs these plans were modified, while still adhering to the planning agreement. Much of the planting, especially at the rear of the building, was put on a wish list to be purchased at a later date. We are now addressing this plus the future maintenance of the beds. |
| New facilities/Activities | |
| What extra facilities (or equipment) will the project provide? | The Village Hall project has created considerable new village facilities. However, costs have forced us to remove the soft landscaping from the original contract. Now the build is complete, we are trying hard to reinstate the Soft Landscape to make the exterior as wonderful as the interiors for the Village and user groups. Where possible we are using volunteers to help plant but quality plants are expensive and garden maintenance is vital. |
| What new activities will take place because of this project? | In the short term our 'green fingered' residents are keen to get involved with planting and maintenance of the landscaping. Watering new plants will be our biggest challenge as there is no outside tap and water has to be carried from the cleaner's cupboard. Longer term we hope to engage the Village gardening club and most importantly, improve the outside area for the Village and where users park or sit. |