

HEDGE END, WEST END & BOTLEY LOCAL AREA COMMITTEE

Monday 24 July 2006

COMMUNITY BUILDINGS GRANT – TOWNHILL FARM COMMUNITY CENTRE

Report of the Area Co-ordinator in consultation with the Community Development Manager, the Head of Development Control and Assistant Chief Executive (Chief Financial Officer)

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that a Community Buildings Grant of £10,000 be allocated to the Townhill Farm Community Association.

Summary

Following a survey and inspection by the Building Services Manager a schedule of minor capital works for refurbishment of Townhill Farm Community Centre has been drawn up. Essential works include the refurbishment of the hall floor as well as internal and exterior maintenance works. This report recommends a community building grant of £10,000 be awarded to Townhill Farm Community Association to enable them to commence a refurbishment programme.

Statutory Powers

Local Government Act 2002

Introduction

1. The Townhill Farm Community Centre was constructed in 1991 and comprises an entrance foyer, toilets, a main hall with adjacent store room, a committee room and adjacent kitchen, and a café area overlooking a patio and garden.
2. The Centre maintains a varied community programme and is well situated being adjacent to the Townhill Farm District Centre serving the western areas of West End Parish.

Minor Capital Work Requirements

3. At the invitation of Townhill Farm Community Association the Building Services Manager undertook an inspection of the premises and has prepared a schedule of recommended capital works. The following priority works have

been identified and form the basis of the Community Buildings Grant application:

- Renewing of main hall floor. This is a granwood floor which requires lifting and renewal. It is anticipated that the main hall will be out of action for approximately 10 days to enable this work to be undertaken at an estimated cost of £6,500.
 - Minor re-pointing and external decoration of the outside of the building to include gutter clearance and overhaul of joints, repairs to overflow pipes and tiles and clearance and re-bedding of paved areas. In addition electrical wiring tests and reports should be obtained in the interest of health and safety together with an NICEIC test certificate. Some new signage to the exterior of the building is also required. An estimated cost of this work is £3,500.
4. The voluntary management committee of Townhill Farm Community Association have provided copies of their accounts and savings. Whilst the Community Association remains solvent it is not in a financial position whereby it can afford to undertake the recommended works. **It is recommended that a Community Buildings Grant of £10,000 be allocated to the Townhill Farm Community Association.**

Financial Implications

5. The sum of £12,371 is available in this Committee's Community Investment Programme which was previously allocated to the provision of social and recreational facilities at Upmill Close. All of these works have been completed and it is appropriate that £6,500 from this residual sum for renewal of the floor is allocated to the works at Townhill Farm Community Centre which is in close proximity and is known to be used by these residents. The remaining minor works are of a revenue nature and £3,500 should be allocated from this Committee's Community Initiatives Revenue budget.

Risk Management

6. The Townhill Farm Community Centre is an important community building strategically placed to serve residents in the western areas of West End Parish. This maintenance work will enhance and protect this community asset and improve the viability of the Community Association.
7. There have been difficulties in recruiting and retaining volunteer members of the management committee. An "action plan" has been developed by the Community Development Manager and key community workers who are working with the management committee to address this issue.
8. The West End Parish Council has formally applied for the transfer of ownership of the Townhill Farm Community Centre. It is likely that this transfer will be completed in April 2007. Whether the building is in Eastleigh Borough Council's ownership or the Parish Council is an academic issue as the building would be eligible for community buildings grants irrespective of ownership.

Conclusion

9. The Townhill Farm Community Centre is an important community asset which requires essential maintenance. Provision of a community building grant will protect and enhance the fabric of the building for the foreseeable future. The recommendations made in this report are consistent with both corporate and local area social and community policies.

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Appendices Attached: 0
Report No AC504JR

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 – SECTION 100D

The following documents disclose facts or matters on which this report or an important part of it is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report:

Nil