

## HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

### Decision Report

<b>Decision Maker:</b>	Executive Member for Policy and Resources
<b>Date:</b>	16 June 2016
<b>Title:</b>	Friends of Droxford Church – request for a Community Buildings Capital Grant
<b>Reference:</b>	7521
<b>Report From:</b>	Director of Culture, Communities and Business Services

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#### 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. At the last Policy and Resources Decision Day on 22 April 2016 a decision on the award of a capital grant to the Friends of Droxford Church was deferred, pending further information.
- 1.2. This report sets out more information and recommends that a grant of £75,000 is awarded to the Friends of Droxford Church.

#### 2. Background information

- 2.1. The Friends of Droxford Church requested a grant of £150,000 from the Community Buildings Capital Grant fund to build an extension onto their Church to house toilets, kitchen and meeting space. This would free up space in the Church to enable wider community use of the Church and the development of a community café. The total cost of the project is £286,000.
- 2.2. A small Sub Committee was set up by the Policy and Resources Select Committee to consider the grant applications to the Community Buildings Capital Grant Scheme and to make recommendations to the Executive Member for Policy and Resources. Cllr Still chaired the Sub Committee and, with the Assistant Director for Community and Regulatory Services, visited all the grant applicants, including Droxford Church, on 16 February 2016.
- 2.3. The subsequent meeting of the Sub Committee on 2 March 2016 received presentations from all the grant applicants, including the Friends of Droxford Church. Members noted that the application related to a Church and therefore was not a purely community facility; unlike the other applications. In view of this the Sub Committee recommended a grant of £75,000 which was 50% of the total requested.

- 2.4. The decision about awarding a grant to the Friends of Droxford Church was deferred by the Executive Member for Policy and Resources on 22 April 2016, pending receiving further more detailed evidence of use by the broader community. This has now been received and is set out below.

### **3. Community Use of Droxford Church**

- 3.1. The Friends of Droxford Church has recently been registered as a charitable organisation with nine Trustees (eight independent and one nominated by the Parochial Church Council [PCC]). A formal agreement will be drawn up between the Friends of the PCC to cover the tenure arrangements between the Church and the community facilities.

#### **Evidence of Need**

- 3.2. In December 2015 the Friends delivered a community survey to 800 households in the local area. The response rate was 10% and the key outcomes were:

- 55% would be likely or very likely to use the community café
- 73% would be likely to attend events
- 39% were interested in activities such as lunch clubs
- 32% were interested in IT advice and support
- Other activities with significant levels of interest were health and wellbeing, local history, arts and crafts, exhibitions and concerts.

- 3.3. Consultation with local stakeholders identified a need for a meeting space for groups (approx. 25) for use by committees, social groups and community support groups. Community use of the main church building could provide large hall space (capacity approx. 250). This complements the nearby Village Hall (capacity approx. 120).

#### **Plans for the Community Café and learning from elsewhere**

- 3.4. The community café will operate Mon-Fri afternoons and Sat-Sun afternoons during the summer (May-Aug). The impact on this operation due to church services will be minimal: main use of the church for services is Sunday mornings; there were only 5 weddings in 2015; minor services and worship can take place in the South chapel without closing the community café.
- 3.5. The Friends are proposing to model the café on a similar café, Barnaby's Coffee Shop, in Swanmore which opened in 2014 and is doing well. This café is run as a stand-alone facility, staffed entirely by volunteers and the proposed Droxford café will be run on a similar basis, providing structured volunteering opportunities in the village.
- 3.6. A list of community members interested in volunteering has been started and a volunteer manager has been identified.

#### **Plans for Other Community Activity**

- 3.7. The space used by the community café will be available for hire outside café operation times. There will also be a small meeting room and the main church building will be available for secular use outside service times.

Types of use being explored include adult and community learning, debt counselling, community groups and clubs for older people and the socially isolated, support groups, mother and toddler group, outreach services from the Wickham GP Practice and PCSO surgeries.

- 3.8. In addition to weekly community bookings/activities, the Friends plan to hold four concerts and four exhibitions per year.

#### **4. Support from local organisations**

- 4.1. At their meeting on 10 December 2015, the Parish Council approved a statement of support for the Friends of Droxford Church's proposals by 4 votes to 2 votes. There was some concern about the lack of a business plan, but this was subsequently submitted to the County Council as part of the grant application in January 2016 and has been assessed by County Council Officers. It is considered to be a satisfactory business plan, setting out a clear way forward and showing how usage of the proposed new facility will increase over time.
- 4.2. Both the local schools are in favour of the proposal. Droxford Junior School identified a need for a space for out of school activity and for larger out of school events, and Droxford Montessori Infant School identified a need for mother and toddler sessions and before and after school activity as current facilities are very limited.
- 4.3. The nearby Village Hall (capacity 120) also supports the proposal to improve the Church's community facilities which will complement those on offer in the Village Hall. In the medium term the aim is to develop joint booking arrangements between the Church's community facilities and the Village Hall.
- 4.4. The Rector of Droxford Church took up his position in autumn 2015 from a previous post in a city. He brings with him a good understanding about community engagement and the need to build cohesion. He is very supportive of the Friends' proposal and has worked with them to develop it to its current state.
- 4.5. Over the last month the Leader of the County Council has received four emails from local residents of Droxford, three of which objected to the Friends of Droxford Church's proposals on the basis that there was no community need and questioning the viability of the proposal. It is very unusual to receive such emails and they prompted County Council Officers to review the business plan again. The review has not changed the Officer's view that the business plan is satisfactory for a new organisation that is starting a business from the beginning.

#### **5. Cost of the Project**

- 5.1. The total project cost is £286,000 and the funding is made up of:

	£	
Private donations	60,000	(£50,000 already raised)
Friends of Droxford Church	6,000	(secured)
Droxford County Fair	6,000	(decision expected June 2016)
Winchester City Council	4,000	(decision expected August 2016)
South Downs National Park Authority	10,000	(decision expected October 2016)
Heritage Lottery Funding	40,000	(decision expected December 2016)
In kind volunteer support	10,000	(drawings, project management)
Funding requested from the County Council	150,000	
<b>Total</b>	<b>£286,000</b>	

## 6. Conclusion

- 6.1. The Friends of Droxford Church has provided detailed evidence about the potential demand for community facilities in Droxford and some clear plans on how the proposed community facility would operate. It is acknowledged that, compared to other grant applicants, the Friends will be starting from scratch to build up community use of their proposed new facility, but their plans are well developed and show genuine community engagement.
- 6.2. In view of this, it is the view of the Officers that a grant of £75,000 is awarded to the Friends of Droxford Church. Cllr Still and Cllr Evans have been consulted on this more recent report and both agree with the recommendation.

## 7. Recommendation

- 7.1. It is recommended that the Executive Member for Policy and Resources awards a grant of £75,000 to the Friends of Droxford Church. This would be on the condition that the necessary consents are granted, appropriate planning permission is in place and that the balance of funding is found.

**CORPORATE OR LEGAL INFORMATION:****Links to the Corporate Strategy**

<b>Hampshire safer and more secure for all:</b>	no
Corporate improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	
<b>Maximising well-being:</b>	yes
Corporate improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	
<b>Enhancing our quality of place:</b>	yes
Corporate improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	

**Other Significant Links**

<b>Links to previous Member decisions:</b>		
<u>Title</u> Policy and Resources Decision Day	<u>Reference</u> 7416	<u>Date</u> 22 April 2016
<b>Direct links to specific legislation or Government Directives</b>		
<u>Title</u>	<u>Date</u>	

**Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents**

The following documents discuss 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. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)

<u>Document</u>	<u>Location</u>
None	

## **IMPACT ASSESSMENTS:**

### **1. Equality Duty**

1.1. The County Council has a duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 ('the Act') to have due regard in the exercise of its functions to the need to:

Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Act;

Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, gender and sexual orientation) and those who do not share it;

Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

#### **Due regard in this context involves having due regard in particular to:**

The need to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons sharing a relevant characteristic connected to that characteristic;

Take steps to meet the needs of persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic different from the needs of persons who do not share it;

Encourage persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

### **1.2. Equalities Impact Assessment:**

The proposed changes to the grants are intended to have a positive impact and advance equality by creating a more open and transparent funding programme.

### **2. Impact on Crime and Disorder:**

2.1. Not applicable

### **3. Climate Change:**

How does what is being proposed impact on our carbon footprint / energy consumption?

Not applicable

How does what is being proposed consider the need to adapt to climate change, and be resilient to its longer term impacts?

Not applicable