

Grampound Community Fund Panel
Meeting Thursday 29 May 2014
To consider applications for grants
Minutes

In attendance

Chairman: Geoff Hodgson
Bryan Coode, Bob Egerton, Peter Hardaker, Dean Jenkins, Roger Paynter.

Apologies

Jane Sloan

Declarations of interest

Peter Hardaker: no interests in any of the applications.

Bob Egerton: no interests in any of the applications.

Bryan Coode: member of the Parochial Church Council which is one of the applicants.

Geoff Hodgson: no interests in any of the applications.

Roger Paynter: no interests in any of the applications.

Dean Jenkins: member of the Parochial Church Council which is one of the applicants.

Statement by chairman

The chairman explained that each applicant would be allowed approximately 10 minutes to present their proposal and then up to 10 minutes would be allowed for questions from panel members. After the three presentations and questions, the panel would debate the merits of each application before making proposals for the allocation of grants and then one or more votes would be taken in order to determine the recommended allocations. Lots had been drawn for the order of presentations and the order was: first, Football Club; second, village hall; third Parochial Church Council.

Grampound Football Club

Allan Webb presented the proposal by Grampound Football Club. He explained that the proposal was for a sports pavilion but that the emphasis of the club had always been on the benefits to people. The club was the only one in the area without a proper facility. There were 120 playing members in the club. A pavilion would allow participation by players, parents, partners, friends and other people. It would allow the club to offer proper hospitality to visiting clubs. In addition, the facility would offer benefits to young people in the village and local area with a youth café and meeting place. The club was fully aware of its safeguarding responsibilities. The proposal was supported by a survey of members and, in principle, by Cornwall Youth Service, although its resources to provide practical help were limited. The building would be constructed to a high standard, with full insulation and air source heat pumps. The budgeted cost was low because of the input of a large proportion of voluntary labour by club members.

In response to questions from panel members, Allan made the following points:

- The proposal would require the permission of the freeholder, the village hall committee, but no problem was foreseen with this.
- Planning permission had not yet been applied for because of the cost of an application (£800).
- The project would not displace any significant income from the village hall since the club used the hall only occasionally, and the effect on the trade of the Dolphin would be small.
- The building would be extendable if demand grew.
- The volunteers necessary to run an effective youth club would come from within the current 150 adults who are involved already within the football club in voluntary duties. The club would also anticipate seeking funding for a professional youth worker to organise the youth club.
- The provision of food and drink facilities was included within the application.
- Other grant funds had been sought from Sita environmental fund and the solar farm fund.
- It was anticipated that the project would generate a net income to the club of £2,500-£3,000 p.a.
- A partial award of funding of, say, £16,000 would not be sufficient to allow the project to proceed. The club would need to secure the total amount sought (£26,300) or very close to that figure.

Grampound Village Hall

Mark Taylor presented the application on behalf of the village hall committee. He said that it was self evident that the current car park was unfit for purpose. Negotiations were currently taking place with Cornwall Council for surrender by the Council of its 99 year lease back to the freeholder, the village hall committee. As part of the settlement of the lease, the Council will pay dilapidations including an allowance of £15,000 towards car park repairs. This amount would only provide patching and the village hall committee wants to do a proper job that will last for decades, this will cost a total of £35k. This work would provide the school with suitable access and would be a precursor to the proposed community shop. No planning permission is required for the work. If only a partial award was made, the committee would not be able to fund the best solution and would have to fall back on a temporary repair. The committee has not sought funding from other sources for this project but is seeking funding for different projects such as improved lighting, improvements by the river bank.

In response to questions from panel members, Mark made the following points:

- The £15k that has been offered by the Council through dilapidations needs to be used to support other work that is not being fully funded by the Council's proposal.
- The additional spaces will be under the trees close to the entrance gates.
- This type of work (tarmac laying) does not lend itself to voluntary labour input.
- The total offered by the Council for dilapidations of £40k does not cover all the work that needs to be done.
- The hall committee does not want to give up its negotiating position with Cornwall Council over the issue of the remaining lease period.
- The committee will liaise with the community shop over groundworks.
- If only half of the amount requested was awarded, the hall committee would not be able to do a satisfactory job.

Parochial Church Council

Colin Micklewright presented the application on behalf of the Parochial Church Council. He explained that Creed Church was the oldest building in the area and it was important that it was preserved. Although generally church attendances were falling, Creed was bucking the trend with gradually rising numbers of up to 25 on Sunday services, and 50 at Easter. The church was also very well used for weddings, funerals and christenings and could be used for concerts. There is not the capacity at St Nuns to provide these events. The application amount was based upon having to pay £5k of irrecoverable VAT, although investigations are ongoing as to whether a lower VAT rate may be applicable.

In response to questions from panel members, Colin made the following points:

- The visitors' book showed the evidence of use of the church and appreciation of its benefit to the community.
- The temperature in the church in winter was below what would be acceptable in any normal workplace.
- The whole heating system needed replacement and it was not feasible to patch up or improve the current system.
- The cost allocated of £2,300 for the surveyor would cover the work necessary to secure a faculty from the church.
- If only £16k were awarded, it is very unlikely that the church would be able to consider progressing the project. Borrowing from the St Nuns trust fund would impose unrealistic costs of repayment on Creed Church.
- The faculty that would be sought from the Church would cover those issues normally covered in listed building consent.
- The community would be encouraged to use the church for other purposes with the improved environment.

Debate of the merits of the applications

Peter Hardaker said that all applications have merit. The social benefits from the football club proposal were good. However, he had concerns about its deliverability and the increased running costs. The village hall application had the complication of the relationship with Cornwall Council. The church application was good, but the number of beneficiaries was low.

Bob Egerton said he agreed that the football club ambition for a pavilion was very worthy of support, but he had concerns over the deliverability of the youth club facility. With regard to the village hall, he felt that a reasonable proposal would be for the £15k offered by the Council to be put towards the car park and that a grant from this fund of £20k could be the matched funding. Despite not being a churchgoer, he felt that the church application met the criteria in the fund for preservation of old buildings.

Bryan Coode said that he could see merits in the football club proposal, he thought that £35k was a large sum for tarmac laying a car park. He felt that it might be possible to save a little on the church proposal.

Roger Paynter said that he thought that the village hall committee should use the £15k from Cornwall Council towards the car park repairs thus reducing the amount that would be needed from the community fund.

Dean Jenkins said that he considered each application on the grounds of viability and community benefit. He had concerns over the football club and village hall proposals. The church proposal was more certain in deliverability but had lower

community benefits. Overall, he rated the village hall as his top priority and the football club and church in equal second place.

Geoff Hodgson said that he was concerned about the sustainability of the football club proposal. He agreed that the village hall car park was close to being dangerous in its present state. He questioned whether the church needed as much as £30k.

Proposals

Bob Egerton said that there seemed to be agreement on the village hall being the top priority. Because of the monies that would accrue from a settlement with Cornwall Council over the lease of £15k towards the car park repairs, he proposed that £20,000 should be awarded to the village hall. This proposal was seconded by Bryan Coode and on a show of hands, 4 members supported this proposal.

A proposal was made by Geoff Hodgson that the football club should be awarded £26,300. This was seconded by Roger Paynter. On a show of hands, this proposal was defeated by 4 votes to 2.

A proposal was made by Bob Egerton to award £30,000 to the church. This was not seconded and was, therefore, not voted on.

There was then a further debate on the possibility of awarding lower amounts to both the football club and the church but the conclusion was that this would leave both parties in unsatisfactory positions and in danger of neither of the projects being delivered.

A proposal was made by Geoff Hodgson and seconded by Peter Hardaker that the award to the village hall committee was revised to £25,000 and an award of £25,000 made to the church. This proposal was carried on a show of hands by 5 votes.

The reasons given by the panel for this decision were:

The award to the village hall would enable the committee to deliver the project of resurfacing the car park by using funds that would flow from Cornwall Council. There was a very high prospect of the project being delivered. The benefit would accrue to a large part of the local community from the improvement of this well-used facility.

The award to the church would enable the parochial church council to deliver the project and the panel was confident that the shortfall in funding could be met either through a mitigation of the VAT issue or through securing contributions towards the gap from the local community. The project would meet Object E of the landfill tax regulations and would provide benefits to the users of this community facility.

The panel regretted that it was unable to support the football club proposal despite its merits. The panel felt that there was uncertainty over the deliverability of the project in terms of planning, match funding and the sustainability of the youth club facility.