

Parish and Town Councils Opening Up Safely and Reconnecting Communities Fund

As part of its commitment to empowering local communities, Somerset County Council has allocated £500,000 for town and parish councils to help support the safe reopening of parish/community facilities and ensure good prevention control measures are in place. SALC is delighted to be working with the County Council on this project and are managing the fund on their behalf, with support from SCC officers.

What can the funding be used for?

The underlying aims for the fund are to support:

1) Opening Up Safely – to make community facilities COVID-19 secure

Eligible items would include:

- Provision of increased cleaning, cleaning equipment and hand sanitiser
- COVID-19 signage/posters, or other resources needed to support infection control measures in parish and town facilities
- Or providing a grant to a community group to do any of the above

Some councils may well have already spent money on reopening measures, so you may bid to cover expenditure already incurred since the 1st April 2021.

2) Reconnecting Communities – some people will have been very isolated during lockdown and may be concerned about mixing again, so we are looking for projects that will support them to get out safely and re-engaged in community activities

Examples of initiatives to help people reconnect could include:

- Projects to support and promote **safe** social interaction at community level e.g. coffee mornings, outdoor activities and small-scale community events
- Projects which promote the [Five Ways to Wellbeing](#) (click on link for details)
- Projects which help to address health inequalities and improve lives of vulnerable or less advantaged groups

This is very much an opportunity for parishes to get creative but please recognise that we are looking for projects that reconnect people in a safe and responsible way.

How much can we apply for?

There will, potentially, be two rounds of funding:

- 1) Initially, all parishes will be encouraged to apply for up to £1,500 of funding. Grant requests of up to £1,500 are likely to be approved quickly if they meet the broad criteria of the fund and payments will be made to applicants throughout September. An application may be for just one item/activity or be made up of a number of different elements (up to £1,500).

- 2) However, we recognise that not all parishes will apply and there is likely to be some funding left unallocated at the end of September. Parish and town councils are, therefore, able to submit an additional application, at the same time as their first, for more than £1,500 should they wish to do so. Once we know how much funding is still available in early October, SALC will convene a panel to allocate the remaining funding.

For projects over £1,500, we are keen to receive applications that demonstrate at least one of the following:

- Parish and town councils working together,
- Providing support to those disproportionately impacted (e.g. vulnerable groups, BAME, older people or those with pre-existing health conditions who were previously isolating)
- Promoting equality and inclusion and fostering good relations
- Considering sustainability where it is an ongoing initiative including how the project will be funded in the future.

Evidence of benefit, addressing local need and partner support will all be considered as part of the assessment process. The maximum amount that can be applied for is £5000.

How do we apply?

All you need to do is complete the short application form below and email it to us at SALC between the 1st and 30th September (Email only, please, as we are still working from home).

If you want to test your ideas out first to make sure they are likely to fall within the scope of the fund, you can contact Jeff Brown, Service Manager for Stronger Communities at Somerset County Council throughout August via email jbrown@somerset.gov.uk or phone 07971 658522

Once we have received your application, we will aim to process your application and make payment within 7 working days, unless we require further information or the project needs revising to be eligible for funding.

If you apply for additional funding beyond the initial £1,500 available to all, we will aim to determine these applications and make payment by the end of October.

How long do we have to spend the money?

Projects must commence before the end of this financial year with delivery completed by end of May 2022.

In June 2022 we will ask you to confirm that you have spent the grant in line with your application and seek feedback on the success of your project. We will also be looking to share best practice from innovative schemes.

Application Form for Parish and Town Councils

Name of council:	Ashwick Parish Council
Completed by:	Kate Egan
Position:	Parish Clerk
Contact telephone number:	01749 343910
Email address:	clerk@ashwickparish.org

1. Main Fund - please indicate amount applied for (max £1,500):	£1,500
Purpose:	
<p>This application has come via the village hall committee. To replace existing hard plastic 'school type' chairs which were many years old and not conducive to the well-being and comfort of our more senior community users. We hope to especially encourage their increased usage of the improved facilities at the hall which were previously very basic and these groups have been reluctant to restart their activities.</p>	
Costings Breakdown:	
Amount	Item / Activity
£1555-£2000	Deluxe stacking banquet chairs

2. Additional Funding - should funds be available (up to £5k):	
Amount applied for:	£5,000
Purpose:	
To support the complete renovation of the village hall to include the addition of a community café within by repurposing the existing garage and store rooms into a new kitchen and seating area. Architect plans have already been approved by the Trustees and we are about to undertake a series of community events and match funding grant applications in order to raise the required funds.	
If this bid is in partnership with another parish or town council or partner organisation, please state partners and include details of any other funding contributions	
To date, over the last twelve months, the village hall has spent over £20,000 on new windows, doors, heating systems, flooring and complete redecoration. We are looking to contribute in excess of £30,000 towards a total project cost of £100,000. We have already received £750 from local businesses, Morris & Perry and one of our Trustees has also raised £750 selling plants locally. We have the support of Ashwick and Oakhill Parish Council as well as local Councillors from Mendip District Council to assist us in this process.	
How will you report and monitor the outcome / success of this initiative?	
We will communicate our progress via the local Beacon publication which is widely distributed in the village and surrounding area as well as on our community Facebook pages.	
Summary of Costings:	
Amount	Item / Activity
Redecoration, flooring, new doors and windows	£20,000
Structural building work plus contingency (to allow for increased cost)	£40,000 + £5,000
Fitting of new Kitchen and Appliances	£20,000
Outdoor seating area improvements, tables and seating	£10,000
Indoor seating, tables and chairs	£5,000

Payment details:	
Full name of payee (as it appears on bank account):	
Parish Council of Ashwick	
Full address of payee:	
Uphill Cottage, Church Street, Croscombe, BA5 3QS	
Bank name and branch:	TSB – Midsomer Norton Brance

Sort code:	30-95-57
Account number:	00040724

Please email completed form to: justin@somerset-alc.org.uk

