

BRECKLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL

Report of: Executive Member for Place, Paul Claussen

To: Informal Executive Meeting, 4 June 2018
Cabinet, 12 June 2018

Author: Clive Rayner, Grant Officer, Norfolk Community Foundation

Subject: Match Funding (large) application

Purpose: To consider the decision to award funding to the Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of Thetford

Recommendation:

- 1) That Cabinet approves the following grant award:
 - £19,817 (or 8.1% of the project costs, whichever is the lower amount) to the Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of Thetford to update facilities to make the church more suitable for community activities.

BACKGROUND – Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of Thetford (Thetford PCC)

- 1.1 The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of Thetford (Thetford PCC) is the body responsible for St Cuthbert's Church in Well Street in the centre of Thetford. Thetford PCC is also a registered charity. In addition to the main church, which is grade II* listed, there is an adjoining Victorian church hall extension plus a further 20th Century extension to this. The hall has toilets and a very basic kitchen. Like many churches use is limited with the PCC estimating that at most the building is used 10% of the time.
- 1.2 The aim of this application is to make the church more relevant to the community and increase the number of hours per week that it is in use by carrying out a range of works to the church hall and the church itself. The initial stage of work involves fully refurbishing and upgrading the hall to provide a new meeting room, a fully equipped catering kitchen, new toilets and improved access for disabled people. A range of uses for the refurbished building are anticipated, and central to this is the plan for the new kitchen. The PCC aims to establish a catering training facility in partnership with a social enterprise to provide training for up to 100 unemployed people each year including residents from the three homeless hostels in Thetford, those people engaged in Drug and Alcohol Recovery Services and those involved with the Criminal Justice System including those recently released from prison. The PCC has identified potential social enterprise organisations to run the facility and has had initial discussions with them.
- 1.3 With a professional standard of kitchen in place the church will then aim to provide a range of food related services such as providing meals during school holidays for children who get free meals at school during term time, lunch clubs for isolated older people, cooking sessions for children including intergenerational work with parents/grandparents and a cold weather soup kitchen for homeless people. In addition there are aspirations to provide a range of other groups and services such as English language classes for migrants, advice and support groups covering topics such as job searches, CV writing, IT skills and benefits/housing advice, training courses and parent and toddler groups. All of these will be able to

benefit from the catering and refreshments provided by the training kitchen. The church's facilities will also be open to the general public via a community café and a range of groups are expected to want to hire the meeting spaces. Users would come from the town centre area and the nearby Abbey Estate where the PCC has been increasing its engagement through the Grace Church – a church that it has 'planted' on the estate which meets on a primary school site.

- 1.4 The PCC has estimated that the project will engage with 7,500 additional beneficiaries over the course of a year. This number includes up to 100 unemployed people per year benefiting from catering training, 40 children per day receiving free meals during school holidays, 30 elderly people per day benefiting from hot meals, 50 members of the local community benefiting from volunteering opportunities, up to 20 homeless people benefiting from a cold weather soup kitchen and parent and toddler groups and coffee mornings benefiting over 90 people per week.
- 1.5 The PCC has carried out a community survey to inform the project. This involved consultations with the general public, existing church users and groups that would potentially hire the facilities. Other organisations such as Genesis Housing which operates two homeless hostels in the town were consulted about the project's potential to benefit their residents. The project responds to the main community issues identified in the survey which were language barriers, unemployment, income deprivation, homelessness and the need for support groups.
- 1.6 Detailed quotes for the work have been sought and the preferred contractor has submitted a quote for £235,228. This figure has been updated in consultation with the project architect to allow for inflation and the project will now work to a budget of £245,000. The PCC has made excellent progress with fundraising and has confirmed funding of £178,381 in place. This sum includes £75,000 from the sale of church property, £20,000 from the National Churches Trust, £20,000 from the Garfield Weston Foundation, £10,000 from the Geoffrey Watling Charity, £10,000 from the Bernard Sunley Foundation and over £10,000 from local fundraising. A further grant application for £10,000 is with the Foyle Foundation with a decision expected in July and there are also plans to sell church silverware which would generate an estimated £10,000. If a grant is awarded by Breckland Council this would leave a funding gap of around £27,000 which the PCC would aim to close through further local fundraising and individual donations. Consideration is also being given to taking out a loan to meet any shortfall or unforeseen cost increases.
- 1.7 Ongoing running costs would be met from hire charges for groups using the meeting facilities and income from the training kitchen/community café. The café would be run by the social enterprise with the risk and profit being shared with the PCC. The project business plan sets out the anticipated income and profit over an initial five year period which shows the project generating a surplus from year one. The assumptions underpinning the forecasts appear to be reasonable.
- 1.8 Planning permission was granted by Breckland Council in July 2010 (reference 3PL/2010/0378/F). The grant application reports that Tracy Green at Breckland Planning has confirmed that as part of the work has already been carried out (renewal of the hall windows) and this has been approved by a Building Regulations the planning permission is extended until such time as the work is completed. The work also has the appropriate permissions from the Diocesan Advisory Committee.

1.9 Delivery of the capital works will be supervised by the project architect. Oversight of the contract with the social enterprise to deliver the training kitchen work will be overseen by the PCC committee, chiefly by one of its members who has extensive experience in working in the supported housing sector.

1.10 A later phase of the overall project would include the removal of the church pews to create an open and flexible space for community activity and events. This phase of works will enhance this initial phase but is not crucial to its success.

2) **OPTIONS**

2.1 Fully fund the application set out in the report

2.2 Part fund the application set out in the report

2.3 Do nothing

3) **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)**

3.1 The grant application meets the criteria of the scheme. This is project which although being delivered by a church is strongly focused on delivering community activity and benefit. The project appears to be well planned and led, and fundraising is well advanced. The project also responds well to the identified needs in Thetford. The assessor gave some consideration to the potential for overlap between this project and the recently funded project at the Charles Burrell Centre to increase opportunities for work experience. However the assessor concluded that the Thetford PCC's focus on catering training means that this project is complementary to the Charles Burrell project.

4) **EXPECTED BENEFITS**

- 4.1
- Individuals participating in the training/volunteering will develop the core skills necessary to apply for employment opportunities.
 - Members of the community will have improved health and wellbeing through access to well prepared meals.
 - People will be less isolated as a result of meeting together more regularly and feeling part of the community in which they live.

5) **IMPLICATIONS**

In preparing this report, the report author has considered the likely implications of the decision - particularly in terms of Carbon Footprint / Environmental Issues; Constitutional & Legal; Contracts; Corporate Priorities; Crime & Disorder; Equality & Diversity/Human Rights; Financial; Health & Wellbeing; Reputation; Risk Management; Safeguarding; Staffing; Stakeholders/Consultation/Timescales; Transformation Programme; Other. Where the report author considers that there may be implications under one or more of these headings, these are identified below.

5.1 **Financial**

5.1.1 The Match Funding reserves held by Norfolk Community Foundation have a current balance of £49,255. In addition to this application there are three small match funding applications totalling £9,995 and a further large match funding application

for £7,500 for decision during June 2018. There are therefore sufficient funds to meet the grant expenditure of £19,817 proposed in this report as well as these other potential commitments.

5.2 Corporate Priorities

5.2.1 The project is closely aligned with the following Breckland objectives: 1) Support groups and organisations to provide a range of local facilities within their communities which further improve learning opportunities, community health and community wellbeing; and 2) Work with partners on supporting older people to remain active, participate and live independently within the community. The project will make the church hall a well-equipped and flexible space in which a range of activities will support community needs. Older people will benefit from a centrally located venue in which they can socialise and access hot meals. In addition the project will provide volunteering opportunities for recently retired older people enabling them to remain active in the community.

5.3 Stakeholders / Consultation / Timescales

5.3.1 Breckland member Roy Brame has confirmed his support for the project as follows: "I would like to take this opportunity to express my total support for this excellent bid, as the Breckland Ward representative and Norfolk County Councillor. It is one of the most enlightened community projects I have read and I believe will benefit Thetford greatly."

6.0 WARDS/COMMUNITIES AFFECTED

6.1 Thetford, particularly Castle Ward

7.0 ACRONYMS

7.1 NCF – Norfolk Community Foundation

Lead Contact Officer

Name and Post: Clive Rayner, Grant Officer,
Norfolk Community Foundation
Telephone Number: 01603 623958
Email: cliverayner@norfolkfoundation.com

Key Decision: No

Exempt Decision: No

This report refers to a Discretionary Service

Appendices attached to this report:

Appendix A – Grant Application