

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL

CABINET MEMBER FOR CUSTOMER AND COMMUNITIES

DATE: 26 March 2024



REPORT OF CABINET MEMBER: DENISE TURNER STEWART, CABINET MEMBER FOR CUSTOMER AND COMMUNITIES

LEAD OFFICER: MICHAEL COUGHLIN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, PARTNERSHIPS, PROSPERITY AND GROWTH

SUBJECT: YOUR FUND SURREY APPLICATION FROM THE WAR AND SPOTTISWOODE MEMORIAL HALL

ORGANISATION STRATEGY PRIORITY AREA: EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES

SUMMARY OF ISSUE:

The vision of Your Fund Surrey is to bring community-led and place-making projects to life, with a focus on wider community benefit that leaves a real legacy.

This report sets out the Your Fund Surrey application from the War and Spottiswood Memorial Hall to develop Peaslake Village Hall in the Borough of Guildford for the consideration of the Cabinet Member for Customer and Communities.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

It is recommended that:

1. The Cabinet Member for Customer and Communities considers whether to fund the full amount requested of £114,500, comprised of:
 - £114,500 of capital funding towards extending and developing Peaslake Village Hall to be paid in staged payments, on evidence of spend.
 - Including 5% to be held by SCC until final evidence provided of income and expenditure, evaluation and completion (such as building control sign-off).

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:

This application has been the subject of a rigorous assessment process by Officers, who consider the project to meet the aims and published criteria of the fund and to satisfy the requirements to award funding.

The project aims to extend Peaslake Village Hall to expand and modernise the current facilities to ensure it can be used by the wider community. The larger facilities will also help to segregate the building, which is vital when different users are using the facility at the same time.

DETAILS:

1. This application is being made by Peaslake Memorial Hall Trustees (Registered Charity No. 200618) in conjunction with Peaslake Players, the local amateur dramatics group. The Hall supports the community in the village and surrounding areas.
2. The project aims to erect a single-storey rear extension to address the inadequacies of the premises, increasing the range of community uses and users of the facility.
3. Peaslake Village Hall was built in 1923 as a memorial to the Peaslake men who served in the 1914-1918 war. Its official name is the War Spottiswoode Memorial Hall, honouring both those service members and the two Spottiswoode sisters whose donations helped build the hall. It is located in the village of Peaslake, in the electoral division of Shere, in the Borough of Guildford, which is ranked 9 in the National Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD), where 1 is the most deprived.
4. The Hall, including the stage and changing rooms, is used for various community events, including the annual Summer Fair, the Christmas Evening, performances and other music and arts events. It is the home of Peaslake Community Council, the venue for Parish Council meetings and a polling station. It is also available to hire for private events and as a hub for larger-scale events such as the Hurtleberry Trail Run. In addition, the Hall is used weekly by a badminton club, toddler group, Pilates group, periodic quiz evenings, cycling events, orienteering groups and private parties.
5. The Hall's current configuration has meant that children are effectively excluded from many activities due to the lack of legally required segregation. Children have had to use an adjacent building and cross a road during the dark and in inclement weather, which is unsatisfactory. The configuration also limits the ability to host events where smaller space is needed or where performances need additional space beyond the hall itself.
6. The proposed extension is to extend the rear of the hall to create new changing rooms and a linking corridor to allow the space to be used flexibly as one or two rooms or up to four separate dressing rooms. This will allow for safeguarding children involved in events as well as full accessibility and soundproofing. The additional toilet facilities are required to serve the needs of audiences, actors, visitors and volunteers during major events where the existing facilities are often found to be seriously lacking.

7. The alterations will allow the facilities to be offered to other drama and arts organisations throughout the year and a wider range of activities and users such as Bridge Clubs, exercise classes and meetings. There has been considerable interest in using the Hall if the facilities are improved.
8. Peaslake Players, the local amateur dramatics group, routinely audition and rehearse in the Hall and require more space for actors and backstage support. They produce at least three performances annually which are attended by over 500 people. Larger productions, especially the annual pantomime, serve an audience of 1500 people from the village, the surrounding communities and well beyond. The ability to provide enhanced local entertainment will benefit the elderly and disabled who cannot easily gain access to theatres in local nearby towns.
9. Notwithstanding the vast benefit of these performances for the local residents and the wider community, there is the value that these activities provide for volunteers including performers, backstage crews and off-location helpers. There are many single and/or elderly people who provide support services such as dressmaking, set design and construction, props provision which fills their time and mitigates loneliness, stress and anxiety.
10. The land and property are owned freehold by the War and Spottiswood Memorial Hall charity. The project has been granted planning permission by Guildford Borough Council and is expected to take 6 months to complete.
11. The project benefits include:
 - Increased opportunities all young people to participate in art and theatre
 - Improved community facilities and provision for local groups and organisations
 - Better segregation and accessibility of facilities
 - Opportunities to enhance social interaction and improve health and wellbeing

CONSULTATION:

12. Have your say, which featured the Peaslake Village Hall Project, received 48 positive comments. No negative comments were received.
13. Letters of support have been received from the following organisations, groups and individuals:
 - Robert Hughes – Surrey County Councillor – Shere Division
 - Peaslake Players Amateur Dramatics Group
 - 58 residents signed a support appeal
 - Shere Parish Council
 - Peaslake Community Council
 - Duffers & Gruffers Choir
 - Monarch Studios (dance & acrobatics company for children in Surrey)
 - Guildford Shakespeare Company
 - Stage Right Theatre School
 - Bray Estates

14. The Divisional Councillor Robert Hughes fully supports the application.
15. The Your Fund Surrey Advisory Panel considered the project at their meeting on 13th March 2024. The Panel unanimously supported the application.

RISK MANAGEMENT AND IMPLICATIONS:

14. An overview of risks against the project is summarised below in Table 1. Officers consider there to be adequate control measures in place.

Table 1. Summary Table of Risks and Key Mitigations

Risk description	RAG	Mitigation action/strategy
Weather		Close supervision
Unforeseen construction issues		Contingency allowed
Scope/Cost increases		Close supervision, additional fundraising

35. Grants over £100,000 but less than £500,000 are monitored annually for 10 years after works completion to ensure ongoing community use. If a project were struggling to reach community groups, SCC would connect them with Community Link Officers and Local Area Coordinators as appropriate as well as other partners in the voluntary sector.

FINANCIAL AND VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS:

16. YFS funding is requested to contribute towards the extension of the village hall. The project has applied for £114,500 which equates to 54% of the overall project costs. The remaining monies needed for the project have been raised or are expected from various sources (see Tables 2 & 3).
17. Table 2 Financial Summary details the other funding received or offered against the total project cost of £212,917. Table 3 details the total project cost breakdown.

Table 2. Financial summary

Amount applied for:	£114,500
Total project cost:	£212,917
Percentage of cost against total:	54%
Have other funding sources been secured?	Yes
Other funding:	See Table 3 below £75,700 received or offered £22,717 to be raised (excluding YFS)
Volunteer contributions:	£18,000
Non-cash contributions:	None
Is there a commercial element to the project?	Yes
Amount suggested for funding:	£114,500

Table 3. Project Cost breakdown

Activity	Total Cost	YFS Funding	Other Funding	
Construction	£161,353	£114,500	£11,400	Peaslake Village Hall-Allocated Reserves
			£7,500	Peaslake Players-Allocated Reserves
VAT	£32,270	£0	£45,000	Pledges Major Private Donors (£5k+)
Professional Fees	£11,294	£0	£4,000	Pledges Minor Private Donors (~<£5k)
Contingency	£8,000	£0	£4,050	Pledges Buy a Brick Campaign
			£3,000	Shere Parish Council
			£750	Bray Estates
			£22,717	To raise
Total	£212,917	£114,500	£98,417	

18. As with all applications, there is a risk that construction and purchase costs will increase between application and approval. This is partially mitigated by the contingency. The applicant has secured quotes that support their costing, and will ultimately be funded based on evidenced, actual spend, up to the amount awarded.

SECTION 151 OFFICER COMMENTARY:

19. Significant progress has been made in recent years to improve the Council's financial resilience and the financial management capabilities across the organisation. Whilst this has built a stronger financial base from which to deliver our services, the increased cost of living, global financial uncertainty, high inflation and government policy changes mean we continue to face challenges to our financial position. This requires an increased focus on financial management to protect service delivery, a continuation of the need to be forward looking in the medium term, as well as the delivery of the efficiencies to achieve a balanced budget position each year.

20. In addition to these immediate challenges, the medium-term financial outlook beyond 2023/24 remains uncertain. With no clarity on central government funding in the medium term, our working assumption is that financial resources will continue to be constrained, as they have been for the majority of the past decade. This places an onus on the Council to continue to consider issues of financial sustainability as a priority, in order to ensure the stable provision of services in the medium term.

21. As such, the Section 151 Officer supports this application. This project has been reviewed financially and is felt to be adequately planned, low risk and has positive support from the local community.

22. The borrowing costs associated with the fund have been fully built into the Council's Medium-Term Financial Strategy. The annual cost of borrowing for this specific project of £114,500 would be £6,672.85

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS – MONITORING OFFICER:

23. The report sets out the information and steps for the consideration of the application further to the Council's governance arrangements for Your Fund Surrey.
24. Further to those arrangements, if approved, the Council and the organisation will enter into a comprehensive funding agreement which will include the performance measures that will be put in place to ensure the funding is used as intended as well as clearly describing any support or additional conditions agreed as part of the funding award.

EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY:

25. Your Fund is designed to provide investment in schemes that encourage community participation, reduce isolation, and develop the potential for social wellbeing and economic prosperity. As such it is anticipated that it will have a positive impact on the local community and particularly those with protected characteristics that may be more likely to experience social and economic exclusion.
26. An Equalities Impact Assessment has been produced for YFS and was circulated as an Annex to the YFS Cabinet Report 26th January 2021.

OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

27. The potential implications for the following council priorities and policy areas have been considered. Where the impact is potentially significant a summary of the issues is set out in detail below.

Area assessed:	Direct Implications:
Corporate Parenting/Looked After Children	No significant implications arising from this report
Safeguarding responsibilities for vulnerable children and adults	Improves capacity to safeguard children by introducing segregation at a well-used community venue
Environmental sustainability	Enhanced environmental credentials of the building
Compliance against net-zero emissions target and future climate compatibility/resilience	The extension will be in compliance with the net-zero emissions target
Public Health	The project has a positive impact on wider health outcomes, encouraging activity and social interaction

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT:

28. Following approval of the funding, a notice of the records of decisions taken will be published within 3 days of the decision being made.
29. Officers will prepare the relevant schedules and funding agreements to enable payment of funds and monitoring and evaluation of the project against its outcomes.
30. The YFS Team Officers will then issue a provisional offer of funding to the applicant, including a copy of a draft Funding Agreement incorporating any additional conditions.

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Consulted:

Divisional County Councillor

Corporate Finance – Surrey County Council

Annexes:

None

Sources/background papers:

Your Fund Surrey Criteria

Your Fund Surrey Governance Document

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