

Report

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Report to:	Enterprise Resources Committee
Date of Meeting:	14 September 2011
Report by:	Executive Director (Enterprise Resources)

Subject:	Blacklaw Renewable Energy Fund – Wilsontown Ironwork St John Lodge 236 Social Club
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1. Purpose of Report

1.1. The purpose of the report is to:-

- ◆ Consider an application to the Blacklaw Renewable Energy Fund from Wilsontown Ironwork St John Lodge 236 Social Club.

2. Recommendation(s)

2.1. The Committee is asked to approve the following recommendation(s):-

- (1) that a grant be awarded to Wilsontown Ironwork St John Lodge 236 Social Club of up to £35,000 towards the refurbishment and internal improvement of the social club subject to building warrant being granted and confirmation of match funding for the project being received by the Council.

3. Background

- 3.1. At the Executive Committee of 3 March, 2004, approval was given to set up a Renewable Energy Fund in respect of Blacklaw Windfarm, and to the administrative arrangements associated with the allocation of funds.
- 3.2. The Fund is financed from payments from Scottish Power who operate the Blacklaw Windfarm. To date, Scottish Power has made payments into the Fund totalling £1,018,921.92 including interest.
- 3.3. The Renewable Energy Fund is administered by Regeneration Services who have responsibility for advising potential applicants, assessing applications and monitoring projects to ensure that the community benefits associated with each project are delivered.

4. Proposal

Wilsontown Ironwork St John Lodge 236 Social Club - 21st Century Upgrade. Phase One

- 4.1. Wilsontown Ironwork St John Lodge 236 Social Club was formed in 1974 and has operated from the same premises on Main Street, Forth since that date. In recent years, the Social Club has been used increasingly by a range of other social and voluntary groups within Forth.

- 4.2. The hall is presently used by a range of local groups including the Women's Rural Institute, Slimming World and Blood Transfusion Services. In addition, it hosts one off events such as fund raising, presentation nights and sports dinners by, for example, local boys football teams. The hall is also utilised by the community for birthdays, weddings, funerals and engagement parties. Forth Bowling Club also use the premises for their social functions and local employers Forth Roofing and MacKenzie Transport Group have held social functions and training events in the hall. The hall is also utilised during the Christmas Lights switch on and the Forth Gala Day.
- 4.3. In response to the increased usage, a number of internal improvements have been undertaken recently but a more comprehensive renewal of the remaining internal elements is necessary if the Social Club is to continue to support the wide range of users.
- 4.4. The project involves refurbishment works, including a new kitchen area, internal decoration, new external door and signage, improved lighting, a new chair lift (making the 1st floor of the Club fully accessible) and new disabled toilets which are Disability Discrimination Act compliant along with widened doorways.
- 4.5. Upon completion, two open days are planned to show local people around the refurbished premises. There are presently ongoing discussions with Community Police regarding holding seminars on home security. Similarly, Lanark Fire Service has been contacted regarding safety in the home seminars for members of the public. Two local businesses who have previously used the facilities have indicated their desire to hold future events within the premises whilst the group are presently speaking with a range of local businesses regarding the composition of a wedding package.
- 4.6. The project will be managed on site by members of the Club who have experience in running similar refurbishment projects elsewhere. It is due to start on site in November 2011 and be completed by January 2012.
- 4.7. The total eligible cost of the project is £70,000. The proposed grant from Blacklaw REF is £35,000 (excluding administration fee of £1,000) equating to an intervention rate of 50%. The remaining, presently unconfirmed, funds of £35,000 are being sought from the Levenseat Trust.
- 4.8. This application scored 28 points from a possible total of 32 during the assessment process. This score permits an intervention level of up to 50%.

5. Employee Implications

- 5.1 There are no employee implications arising from this report.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1. To date, Scottish Power has made payments into the Blacklaw Fund of £1,018,921.92 including interest (i.e. a £992,621.09 contribution and £26,300.83 interest).
- 6.2. Blacklaw has committed funds, from the main Fund, of £645,641.40 towards projects from an available budget of £761,135.59 (70% of the total £992,621.09 plus interest of £26,300.83 plus an additional £40,000 transferred from an underspend on the Local Grant Scheme to meet demand). The remaining monies comprise the Local Grant Scheme which is administered by Leader.

6.3. Therefore, there are sufficient funds available from the remaining balance of £115,494.19 to meet the total of £35,000 requested.

7. Other Implications

7.1. The risks associated with the projects are focussed on the potential for cost overruns or delays to the programme.

7.2. The applicants have indicated that any cost increases will be managed within the present budgets subject to agreement from the REF on any changes to their proposed project. This is highly unlikely to have an impact on the Council.

7.3. Delays to the programme will have no impact on the Council.

7.4. Without the contributions from the Renewable Energy Fund, it is highly unlikely that the project outlined will proceed.

8. Equality Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangements

8.1. This report does not introduce a new policy, function or strategy and therefore no impact assessment is required.

8.2. All necessary consultation arrangements have taken place.

Colin McDowall
Executive Director (Enterprise Resources)

6 September 2011

Link(s) to Council Objectives/Improvement Themes/Values

- Improve health and increase physical activity
- Improve the quality of the physical environment
- Effective and efficient use of resources
- Partnership working, community leadership and engagement

Previous References

- Executive Committee Report on Community Benefit – 3 March 2004
- Executive Committee Report on Renewable Energy Developments and Community Benefit – 1 December 2010

List of Background Papers

- Completed REF Grant Application Form and associated information dated 2nd August 2011 received from Wilsontown Ironwork St John Lodge 236.
- Completed REF assessment form dated 3rd August 2011 for Wilsontown Ironwork St John Lodge 236.

Contact for Further Information

If you would like to inspect the background papers or want further information, please contact:-

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