

MEETING: 14/11/2018

Ref: 14739

ASSESSMENT CATEGORY - Making London More Inclusive

St John the Evangelist Church, Kingston

Adv: Geraldine Page

Base: Kingston

Amount requested: £99,300

Benefit: Kingston

Amount recommended: £99,300

The Applicant

St John's Church (SJC) founded 1871 is a Victorian Grade II listed Anglican parish church in the Spring Grove neighbourhood of Kingston upon Thames. It is a member of Inclusive Church and welcomes people from all backgrounds and values diversity. It has an active community programme including projects of its own and others in partnerships with local charities. These include: Bedelsford School for Children with Special Educational Needs, Skills training for the unemployed, Youth Performing Arts group, Parent classes and a Saturday café for local people and those more isolated such as the elderly to meet socially. The church hall is regularly used by a range of hirers and currently has a contract with Kingston University to provide a space for examinations. SJC aspirations are centred on operating as a community hub where local people feel connected, irrespective of faith or religion.

The Application

In May 2016 you awarded SJC £2,300 for an access audit on the main church building and church hall. In summary, the building is in urgent need of restoration and accessibility works. SJC seeks a grant towards the costs of the accessibility works which include adding an accessible toilet, reconfiguration of main entrance lobby, improvements to entrances to give step free access and hand rails, assessable external footpath, repairs to some flooring areas (currently a trip hazard and not accessible for wheelchair users) signage and hearing enhancement system.

The Recommendation

Your funding will enhance the SJC building as a facility for inclusive community use and commercial hire and support its long-term sustainability. The project responds to evidenced demand for accessible community spaces and has been carefully designed to meet the needs of user groups.

£99,300 towards the redevelopment of the church building to accessible standards to include reconfigured and improved accessible entrance lobby and footpath, ramps and step free access, hearing enhancement system and accessible toilet. Grant is conditional on registration with the Charity Commission.

Funding History

Meeting Date	Decision
31/01/2018	£2,600 to provide an eco-audit.
24/05/2016	£2,300 towards an access audit for the main church building and church hall of St John the Evangelist Church in Kingston.

Background and detail of proposal

Over the last seven years in the light of the numerous ongoing issues with accessibility, maintenance and restoration of the building, SJC and the local community have fundraised and encouraged donations for its much-needed

restoration. Without refurbishment, St John's risks rapid deterioration; continuing to lose hirers; and being unable to fulfil its vision to operate as a community hub where local people feel connected, irrespective of faith or religion. It is a way off the full total required but £200,000 has been raised to date. To get work started and make essential repairs SJC has had to make the decision to prioritise and phase the works as funds are raised. Phase one is underway to upgrade the heating, lighting, electrics and some flooring replacement during summer 2018. Phase two includes the access work which forms this application. The proposed works draw on architectural plans for the building's restoration up to RIBA Stage H previously commissioned and have planning approval. A strong project committee made of local volunteers with relevant professional expertise has been set up to oversee the restoration project. They include a structural engineer and architect. SJC has consulted widely about its plans and to increase community use and has the support of the local authority and other local organisations which would be able to use the accessible community space. Potential new users who have already confirmed interest include Kingston Refugee Action, Bradbury Centre for assisted living and Kingston College. Kingston as a whole is not a deprived borough, however there are pockets of significant deprivation. There is one Kingston Lower Super Output Area (LSOA) 6 in the most deprived 20% of all areas in England, and six are in the most deprived 40%. Upgrading the facilities will establish SJC as a good quality, safe, sizeable, sustainably run, accessible community space that is will support some of the most deprived people in the borough.

Financial Information

As a result of the fundraising efforts for the restoration project SJC income is over the £100,000 threshold (relating to Churches that are Excepted Charities) for registration with the Charities Commission (CC). Your Funding Manager raised this and SJC have confirmed they are in the process of registering with the CC. This will be made a condition of grant. The projected deficit at the end of 2018 is due to planned expenditure on new heating and lighting systems. This deficit is fully covered by the restricted fund. The work is underway with a completion date of mid-November.

Year end as at 31 December	2017 Examined Accounts £	2018 Forecast £	2019 Budget £
Income & expenditure:			
Income	200,472	126,889	99,625
- % of income confirmed as at 26/09/18	n/a	66%	16%
Expenditure	(83,923)	(271,782)	(85,685)
Total surplus/(deficit)	116,549	(144,893)	13,940
Split between:			
- Restricted surplus/(deficit)	125,308	(146,398)	12,500
- Unrestricted surplus/(deficit)	(8,759)	1,505	1,440
	116,549	(144,893)	13,940
Cost of Raising Funds	805	2,388	2,500
- % of income	0.4%	1.9%	2.5%
Operating expenditure (unrestricted funds)	72,763	72,050	74,185
Free unrestricted reserves:			
Free unrestricted reserves held at year end	22,298	23,803	25,243
No of months of operating expenditure	3.7	4.0	4.1
Reserves policy target	30,000	30,000	30,000
No of months of operating expenditure	4.9	5.0	4.9
Free reserves over/(under) target	(7,702)	(6,197)	(4,757)