

## Project Summary for East of England Regional Assessment Panel

1.1	<b>Project Title:</b> St Mark's 'Growing with the Community '
1.2	<b>Lead Organisation:</b> St Mark's Church Community Centre <b>Contact name:</b> Wendy Rider, Centre Manager <b>Address:</b> Calder Rise, Bedford. <b>Postcode:</b> MK41 7UY <b>Telephone:</b> 01234 342613 <b>E-Mail:</b> office@thisischurch.com <b>Project Address:</b> As above <b>Post Code:</b>
1.3	<b>Name of nearest landfill site (any operator) and distance to project site:</b> Stewartby <b>Name of all Biffa operations and distance to project site:</b> St Neots Depot 8.68, St Neots Recycling 9.42
1.4	<b>Entrust project no:</b> <span style="float: right;"><b>Class of project: D / DA / E</b></span> <i>(Rural Action East)</i>
2.1	<b>The aim of the project is to</b> provide a multi purpose community building with two large halls available to the whole community for social and recreational purposes open every day from 8.30am until 10.00pm. The finished centre will form part of our wider community centre buildings and community programme expansion.
2.2	<b>Summary of project:</b> <p>A part of St Mark's Church Community Centre is used as a church for two hours a week. For the rest of the time the entire premises are available as a community centre resource offered to all the community without discrimination. St Mark's Church Community Centre provides care in the community literally from the cradle to the grave. We have an NHS baby clinic providing care for mothers and babies; we also offer bereavement support and a place to bury cremated remains of those who have died, free of charge. Access to local facilities, without the need to travel out of the community is an important part of our ethos. For this reason we welcome activities such as the opening of a police station in our premises where officers can take crime reports and hold surgeries. St Mark's also provides an all day pre-school with before and after school clubs to assist families, a day care centre for people with learning disabilities and is home to Autism Bedfordshire.</p> <p>The Centre is open seven days a week throughout the year and currently provides a home to over 46 community groups and charities. It is the busiest community centre in Bedfordshire and currently welcomes nearly 2,000 people per week. The original building was built in 1974 and over that time, as the community has expanded, St Mark's has expanded to meet increased need.</p> <p>The centre promotes and benefits from an extraordinary level of voluntary commitment from the community. St Mark's operates only with the dedicated support of 130 volunteers each week. St Mark's provides a physical home to community groups in a superbly managed suite of premises. St Mark's also acts as a resource assisting groups in the initial stages of development and providing ongoing support and training.</p> <p>However, three years ago we recognised an increasing problem with lack of space. Groups and individuals were being turned away, simply because we had run out of room. Consultation with the local council also revealed an increasing population with new</p>

	<p>housing developments planned. It was as a result of this pressing need that we decided to build a new two storey building to enable us to welcome an additional 1,000 people every week. We were fortunate to be selected as national finalists in the WREN Village Hall and Community Centre Challenge 2005, receiving a substantial prize of £ and being invited to receive a further £ from the general fund to enable the substantial building to be completed. However we require funds to complete the project, kitchens, toilets etc. This is why we are seeking help from Biffaward.</p> <p>The construction work has been subject to a thorough tendering process with our architect and the lowest quotation obtained has been submitted by Meadsway Construction for £XXX. Additional expenditure includes £XXXX professional fees and planning and £XXXX for interior furnishings, making a total project cost of £XXXXX.</p> <p>WREN will be responsible for Stage 1 of the project £XXXX and Stage 2 £XXXXX. We are now seeking a partner to assist us to bring the project to completion with stage 3, the final part of the project.</p> <p>Stage 3 will specifically cover provision of kitchen and toilet areas inside the new centre and also some essential equipment including tables and chairs. This stage of funding will also include the provision of exterior landscaping, mandated by our planning approval. This landscaping will provide a sensory garden, which is considered important given the high number of our users with learning disabilities.</p>
<b>3.1</b>	<b>Why is the project needed?</b> <p>St Mark's is located in an urban area with desperate need for community facilities. The local parish numbers 16,000 people and the population is expanding with 650 new homes planned for construction over the next two years. Local housing is mixed with high rise tower blocks, housing association and social housing, and owner occupied residential properties. Our building scheme is our response to the needs which have been presented to us by the local community and users of our community centre.</p> <p>Due to the lack of adequate facilities our Centre is bursting at the seams and we are having to turn groups away. When we are forced to turn community groups away, there is literally nowhere else for them to go. St Mark's is building to meet real demand which currently cannot be met, across the widest range of community groups.</p> <p>We have communicated widely in our community to ensure the most extensive consultation process. Our business plan includes letters of support from Borough and Councillors, Parish Council and Council of Voluntary Service. We have also conducted our own surveys and audit of current users and community groups.</p> <p>Evidence of the real and apparent need for our new community centre building is found in the planning permission process in which we have been engaged over the last three years. St Mark's obtained permission to develop a new building extension on the site in 2003, without any objections being received. Since that time the Borough Council has provided additional land to St Mark's to assist with our expansion. This has resulted in the proposals being changed to allow for a larger building and a second planning application has been received for this, once more without any objections.</p> <p>The willingness of the Borough Council to make available green open space for our expansion, and the total endorsement of the community is evidence of the high regard in which St Mark's is held in the local community and a recognition of the importance of our expansion.</p>

<b>3.2</b>	<b>How will the project benefit your community?</b>  <p>St Mark's currently welcomes nearly 2,000 people per week; the new building will enable us to provide facilities for an additional 1,000 people per week. This new community centre building scheme will therefore enable St Mark's to be better placed to answer local demand and fulfil the vision for future community resourcing. The additional space will provide opportunities for some of the most disadvantaged groups in our community and ensure the widest possible inclusion. Specifically this new building will enable a significant increase in our capacity to concentrate our work especially with young people.</p> <p>The immediate benefit of the new facility will be our increased opportunity to accommodate community groups which currently have no meeting place. The new community halls could be filled straight away with people who have asked for meeting facilities and who have been unavoidably turned away. As an example the local police officer, with help from volunteers in our community, has recently started a youth group in our centre. However we have only one time available in the week and we wish to expand the opportunities for work alongside these young people. The new Centre will provide these much increased opportunities.</p>
<b>3.3</b>	<b>How has/will the project involve your community? Has the community been consulted e.g. through Parish Plans, and have any conclusions been reached?</b>  <p>Members of the local community provide increased value from our services and young people from local schools derive great benefit from the work experience which we provide in areas such as administration, children's work and social services. It is only with the continued extraordinary commitment of volunteers that our centre is open and staffed each day from 8.30am until 10.00pm. Volunteers assist with groups providing community service to all ages, as well as providing practical support such as the maintenance of our Centre and grounds which are always kept to a high standard of appearance with regular maintenance. Volunteering is the backbone of our enterprise. It must also be remembered that St Mark's is unique in providing a community centre with enormous opportunities for volunteering engaged in ensuring the satisfactory delivery of services. The new centre will provide increased opportunities for volunteering for all.</p> <p>This project is actively supported by individuals and all representative groups from the local community. We have consulted extensively throughout every stage of this project for over three years. St Mark's is delighted that the new building was agreed by the Borough Council Planning Department with the full support of the local community, no objections have been received throughout the process of two planning applications.</p> <p>The need for the new Centre was established through our usual procedures of direct community involvement in the management and operation of the centre. The Management Committee is drawn from the local community and is responsible for implementation and oversight of the Centre. Community groups and users are all invited to the regular meetings which function as Community Forum. The expansion of the community and the increasing community needs have been recognised by local County and Borough Councillors who have stressed this in their letters of support.</p> <p>Users and groups involved in the consultation process who have given their full support include -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Community Forum</li><li>Audit of all 46 user groups</li><li>Brickhill Parish Council</li><li>Borough &amp; County Council</li><li>Other community providers</li><li>North Beds Council Voluntary Service</li><li>Diocese of St Albans</li></ul>

**3.4 How will the facility be sustained after project is finished?**

This project is a development of an already successful community centre, with a proven track record and reputation of excellent management and performance.

Some assurance can be given concerning the future viability of our project, from the consideration that we are seeking to deliver an expansion of recognised outstanding practice. As an example, St Mark's has demonstrated an ability to be successful in competitive funding situations. This is reassuring for a funding partner and an indication of confidence in St Marks to thrive in the challenging conditions of community resourcing. St Mark's was recently pleased to receive the award of £160,000 from the European Social Fund for work alongside adults with learning disabilities, providing training and resources to assist with increased opportunities for employment. The new community centre building will form part of our overall strategy to work at the forefront of efforts towards the widest social inclusion in the community.

Owing to the level of demand for community facilities, the existing centre and new facilities will be instantly utilised by community groups. This level of demand is recognised as a positive indication of future revenue income to assist in the financial provision for the community centre. The new centre will be integrated into the total provision of our community programme and form a part of our structured planning, as identified in the cashflow forecast in the business plan. The presence of existing facilities also allows wider range of deployment choices within a flexible framework able to respond to growing community need.

St Mark's provides an affordable choice for community groups, located at the lower end of the range of charges made by community centres across Bedfordshire. The business model adopted is that of budget airlines, achieving highest return through always ensuring maximum occupancy. Income is therefore predictable and whilst not guaranteed, relatively assured. From an entirely business perspective these lower charges position St Marks in a secure location in the market, unlikely to be threatened by competitive pricing structures elsewhere. It is also apparent that in the event of a more challenging financial climate, there is the opportunity to make some increase in charges to enable a more favourable income/expenditure ratio. Such a circumstance can be envisaged if the recent utility increases became more frequent.

St Mark's is fundamentally committed to providing community facilities which are outstanding, whilst retaining a modest charge. Such an approach is an ethical response to the difficulties encountered in communities and the importance of social inclusiveness. However previous experience has determined that such a model also has a positive impact upon growth and subsequent income. St Mark's benefits from diversity in user groups and a beneficial mix of non-profit and profit making groups.

The new centre will benefit from incorporation into the St Mark's model of community provision and be governed by the same policies and practices which have ensured our success. As a result of constant consultation throughout the planning stage we are also assured of the continued support from our volunteer force which has a sense of ownership of the project. The widest continued involvement of volunteers is critical for our sustainability and their participation at all levels of management guarantees our access to the necessary benefits of unpaid voluntary support.

St Mark's works closely with other community organisations and this partnership approach to community needs has resulted in St Mark's becoming an integral part of community life, with the obvious benefits which this provides for sustainability. As an example, St Mark's

	provides the location for the Clerk of Brickhill Parish Council and is also used a police 'cop shop' for Bedfordshire Police. Both of these are essential local services from which St Mark's derives important income and prestige, each essential for future sustainability.		
<b>3.5</b>	<b>Expected start date:</b>	As soon as possible	
<b>3.6</b>	<b>Expected date of completion:</b>	Six weeks from commencement	
<b>4.1</b>	<b>Total cost of project:</b>	£ X	
<b>4.2</b>	<b>Amount requested from Biffaward:</b>	£ X	
<b>4.3</b>	<b>Third party funder?</b>		
	<b>Name:</b> Butterfield Trust	<b>Amount:</b> £X	<b>Status:</b> Confirmed
<b>4.4</b>	<b>Source of other funding?</b>		
	<b>Name:</b>	<b>Amount:</b> £	<b>Status:</b>
	<b>Name:</b>	<b>Amount:</b> £	<b>Status:</b>
	<b>Name:</b>	<b>Amount:</b> £	<b>Status:</b>
<b>4.5</b>	<b>Breakdown of major costs:</b>		
	<b>Item:</b> Toilets	<b>Cost:</b>	£ X
	<b>Item:</b> Kitchen Fittings & equipment	<b>Cost:</b>	£ X
	<b>Item:</b> Cupboards/storage	<b>Cost:</b>	£ X
	<b>Item:</b> Landscaping/sensory garden	<b>Cost:</b>	£ X
	<b>Item:</b> Chairs & Tables/equipment	<b>Cost:</b>	£ X
			£ X
		Vat	£ X
		<b>Total</b>	<b>£ X</b>
<b>5.1</b>	<b>Additional Information is required if applying for a biodiversity (DA) project. Please see the guidance notes below about the additional information you should include.</b>		

## Biffaward Project Summary Guidance Notes

The purpose of this summary is to provide the East of England Regional Assessment Panel with an overview of your planned project, why it is needed and who it will benefit within your community. The summary form requests some of the basic information relating to your project, which can be taken forward and used in a full application to Biffaward.

### Eligibility Criteria

Projects applying for Biffaward grants may do so under 'Public parks and amenities' or 'Buildings and structures' or 'Biodiversity'. Very briefly all projects need to identify and will be assessed on:

- Community benefit and engagement.
  - Ensuring public access for 104 days per year.
  - Consultation with the community.
- Innovation and good practice.
  - Expansion of existing services.
  - Providing new services.
- Quality of Life Impact.
  - Social and/or economic.
- Partnership work.
- To be within 10 miles of a Biffa Waste Services operational landfill site.

### Exclusions

- An organisation's core operating costs.
- Road shows, conferences or seminars unless they are an integral part of a large project.
- Feasibility studies, option appraisals and development studies.
- Green/environmental business clubs.
- Retrospective finding.
- Community buses.
- Applications solely for Disability Discrimination Act improvements (unless part of a new build).

## Completing the Form

### Section 1 - Details

1.1 Please include the place name (where possible) in the project title.

1.2 Ensure contact details (full postal address, telephone and email address) of the **Organisation** and **Person** acting on behalf of the organisation are included.

1.3 Use the Biffaward website: [www.biffaward.org](http://www.biffaward.org) to locate your nearest Biffa Waste Services operation.

1.4 For use by Rural Action East.

### Section 2 – The Project

2.1 Please provide concise description (less than 50 words) what will be the achievement of the project if the application is successful e.g. Installation of a Heating system, will allow greater use of facilities, available for more of the year and be more economically manageable for the Village Hall.

2.2 Provide a brief description (½ -1 page of A4 maximum) of how the project will be carried out, for example, if works will be done in phases. Also (if known) who will be doing the work, any partners involved in the project.

### **Section 3 - Community**

This section helps you as a group to demonstrate the need for and benefits of the project

#### 3.1 Why is the project needed?

- Can you demonstrate any consultations carried out with the community?
- Do any similar facilities exist in your area? Do they provide similar services? Or, why/how is your facility different?
- If your project is to carry-out repair/improvements to a facility, can you clearly demonstrate why?
- If known, does your project contribute to any national, regional or local strategies?

#### 3.2 How will the project benefit your community?

Try to define the outputs, for example, installation of a heating system would be economically and environmentally efficient; therefore outcomes of this would be greater use of the facility through colder months of the year and more varied groups using the facility.

#### 3.3 How has/will the project involve your community?

- Mention any partners e.g. local or parish councils, voluntary or community organisations, national or sporting organisations.
- If available, describe how the Parish Plan identified the need for the project?
- Have any other surveys/questionnaires been used to identify need for the project, suggested possible solutions and can demonstrate support from the community?

#### 3.4 How will the facility be sustained after the project is finished?

- Briefly explain how the facility and services will continue to be managed both operationally and financially and by whom?
- How will the community be made aware of the changes?

3.5 When could the project start if the application was successful? Bear in mind payment of the grant can be 6 months from submission of this Summary.

3.6 Typically the project should be completed within 2 years of the start date.

### **Section 4 – Finance**

#### 4.1 What will be the total cost to complete your project?

- If the project is to be completed in phases try to cost out each phase.
- We advise that VAT should be included where appropriate, as at present VAT is irrecoverable on landfill tax contributions. Further advice can be sought from your local VAT advice centre. Our guidance is that, VAT should be included on all costs to employ a contractor and purchase materials and goods.

4.2 Amount requested from Biffaward towards your project – this can be any sum of money between £4,545 and £45,454. (There are administration fees paid to Rural Action East and ENTRUST which are added at the main grant application stage. These are part of the grant made by Biffaward).

- Biffaward grants can be used as match funding, please state the discrete element Biffaward would be used for.
- Biffaward will not support projects requesting a 'contribution to an overall pot' of funding.

4.3 The Landfill Tax Credit Scheme regulations require that at least 10% of the project's funding should come from another source (usually a third party funder), therefore Biffaward can only contribute to 90% of the costs, other sources of funding are essential. If known at this stage please state who the third party funder would be.

4.4 If you have additional sources of funding for the project please list the details and if known, the status e.g. applied for, received or pledged etc.

4.5 If possible, list costs for major components that make up the total cost of the project. Please try to obtain realistic estimates from architects, suppliers and contractors before making your application.

## **Section 5 – Biodiversity**

5.1 The aim is creation, restoration and management of areas specifically to increase biodiversity, including maintaining and/or recovering a species in its natural habitat.

### **Eligibility**

- Identification of specific habitats/and or wildlife and location of the project.
- Demonstrate partnership/lead agency approach.
- Contribute to the local Biodiversity Action Plan.
- For further information on action plans visit [www.ukbap.org.uk](http://www.ukbap.org.uk)

### **Points of note**

- Projects will need to include provision within the budget for ongoing monitoring after the period of funding is complete.
- A full dissemination strategy should be submitted with the application.
- A timescale will need to be agreed for on going work and details regarding future access to the site for monitoring purposes should be included.
- Multiple site projects will require separate budgets, for registration purposes.
- Note that the project can be on private land with no public access.

### **Exclusions**

- Projects that will not lead to a direct improvement to the habitat e.g. research focussed projects.
- Work on private and public land where there is no evidence of the intent to meet conservation aims in the context of biodiversity.
- Projects with no support from key agencies.
- Other exclusions as stated under the Biffaward main grants scheme.