

Forum Area or Division:	Eden - Alston and East Fellside
Reference:	CGA/1345-22
Group Name:	Alston Moor Golf Club
Community Development Officer:	Amy Frith
Community Development Assistant:	Lucy Tonkin
Amount Requested:	£5,000.00
Total Project Cost:	£136,000.00

APPLICATION REPORT

Application Summary

Alston Moor Golf Club is a community amateur sports club based 2 miles from the centre of Alston. More info here - www.alstonmoorgolfclub.org.uk

The group are looking to have a major observatory built on site to be the first one of it's kind in Cumbria, and have been successful in securing £116,000 of 'Inspiring Eden' funding from Eden District Council.

The site has had its darkness measured and is classified as 'Milky Way class' – the best scale of darkness possible and on par with Kielder and unusually with that measure of darkness, it is close to a town for accommodation and other amenities for visiting users of the observatory. A fully equipped observatory of this scale does not exist in Cumbria at this time.

The observatory will be used for stargazing amateurs, schools and Universities for education and research purposes, plus remote users from around the world who can access by booking slots to auto open the roof and adjust the telescopes via a computer link. Remote users will also be given details of the local area to encourage more visitors.

The local community will benefit from the project as it will bring in 'stargazing tourism' and encourage more people to visit the area, benefitting the local economy. The year round increase in visitors will give the economy a welcome boost outside of its summer time peak visitor season. The local school will also benefit by using the observatory outreach programme for science and maths teaching, and the head teacher is very enthusiastic about the scheme.

The group have forged relationships with both Lancaster and Durham Universities who are both keen to be involved with observatory moving forward. As well as being able to visit the site to use the observatory, the Universities will be allowed access to remotely log on to view the skies from their classrooms at times when the observatory is not in use.

The group are looking for additional funding to top up existing funds already allocated to the project. Since initial costings for the project were gathered prices have risen. The group are now seeking further funding to assist with covering the additional costs. Applications have also been submitted to the Royal Astronomical Society and Cumbria Community Foundation to cover these costs.

Funding will be used to purchase internal observatory equipment including computers, software, online booking systems, telescopes etc.

Key Themes Met

The project is:

Proposed by a not for profit organisation

Will be of benefit to the local community

Supports the County Council vision in the 2018 – 2022 Council Plan

Listed in the Alston Moor Area Planning Group action plan

Is requesting funding for a one off project
Is requesting funding for 3.6% of the total project cost

Number of People Benefiting

100 +

Breakdown of Project Costs

Telescopes and equipment £66,636.00
Building costs ex roof £46,215.29
Roof & mechanism EST £7,200.00
PC other small items inside £3,600.00
Electrics EST £4,800.00
Solar Panels EST £9,600.00

Total £138,051.29 (inc. VAT)

Previous CCC Funding

No previous CCC funding

Grant Amount Recommended

£5,000

Officer comments

Comments from Elected Member(s) / Neighbourhood Forum / Grant Panel

Member Signature:

Date: